LONG LIVE VINYL

ISSUE 33
DECEMBER 2019
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GENE CLARK
BYRDS LEGEND'S LOST MASTERPIECE REVISITED

1979 IN VINYL
GANG OF FOUR & BUZZCOCKS ON MUSIC'S YEAR ZERO

STEREOPHONICS
TINDERSTICKS
LANKUM

JEFF LYNNE
"I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT MY SONGS WERE PRETTY GOOD!"

67 NEW REVIEWS!
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THE MAGAZINE FOR VINYL LOVERS

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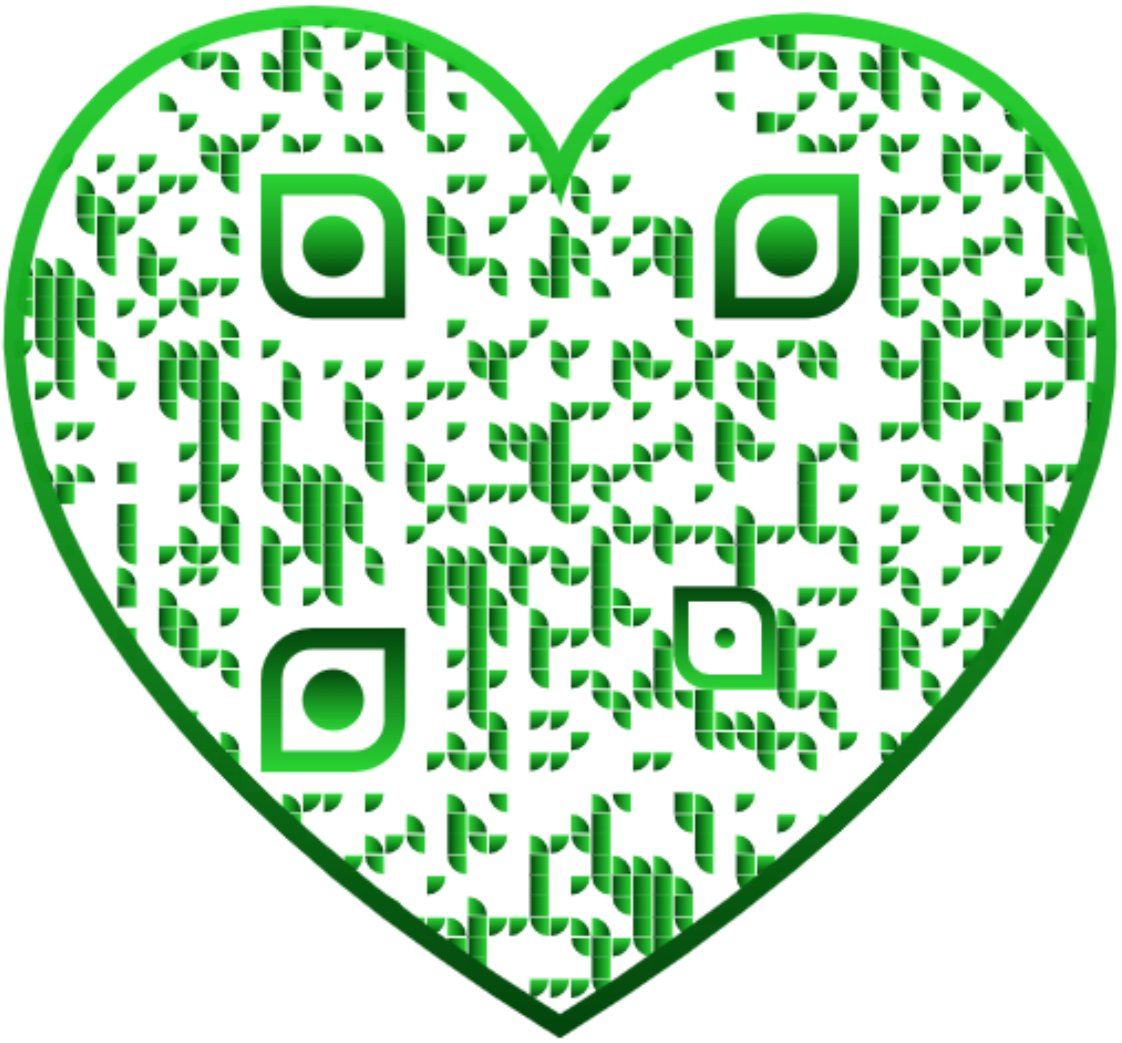

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Welcome...

The Winter Of Discontent, the dawn of Thatcherism and vicious spending cuts. Civil unrest on the streets, a vote for Scottish independence, football eating itself and spawning the first million pound player. Worst of all, the opening of the first JD Wetherspoon pub… the dark clouds were gathering over Britain in 1979. It's hard not to see the parallels 40 years on. Yet out of such adversity at the end of the 70s came the cavalry, an advance of disaffected bands from disparate musical backgrounds giving a voice to a generation and smashing down musical boundaries. The Clash's *London Calling* led the charge, a sprawling double album that tore up the faded punk blueprint and inspired countless British teenagers to pick up guitars and form bands. In this month's cover story, Danny Biggane speaks to 30 of those bands as they remind us why *London Calling* remains one of the best albums ever made. Daniel Dylan Wray picks up the baton and enlists members of post-punk trailblazers Buzzcocks, Gang Of Four and The Pop Group to unravel the legacy of one of the most important years in UK music. Four decades later, the landscape is troublingly similar to that in 1979, albeit there are now 900 Wetherspoons and for £1 million forwards read £80 million centre-backs; but can we have faith that a similarly reactionary and articulate music scene is emerging? The answer, pleasingly, is yes. The rise of IDLES, Fontaines D.C., The Murder Capital, Shame, Slowthai, Snapped Ankles and Goat Girl, to name but a few, demonstrates that young British and Irish bands have got the bit between their teeth once again. Is 2019 another Year Zero for music? That might be a bit of a stretch, but there's plenty to celebrate in these troubled times; check back next month for our Top 100 albums of the year. Elsewhere this issue, we hear why Jeff Lynne has vacated the producer's chair to concentrate on making new music, and Lankum and Tindersticks tell us about their own new albums. We're also celebrating the long-overdue reissue of Gene Clark's criminally under-appreciated *No Other*. Thanks for reading.

Gary Walker *Editor*

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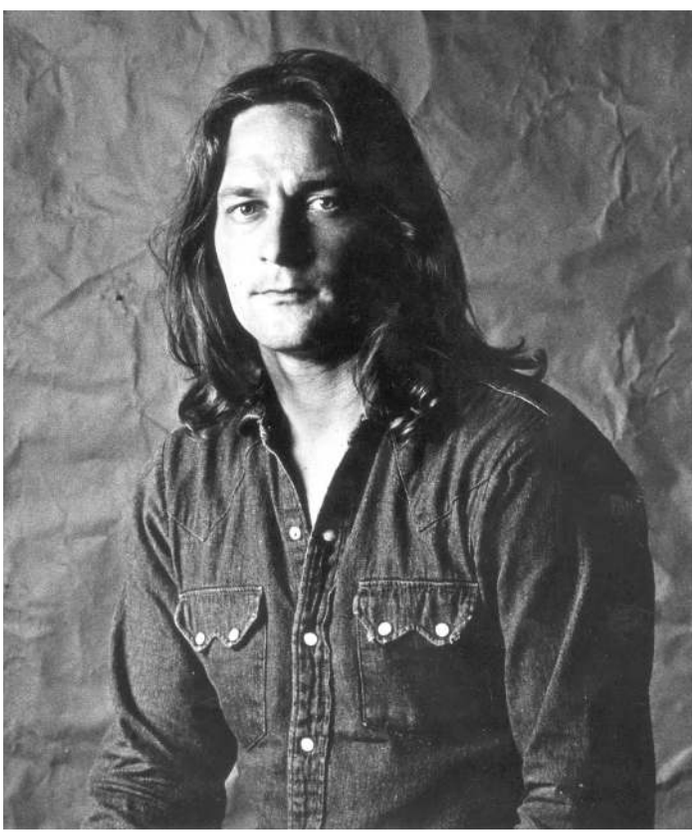
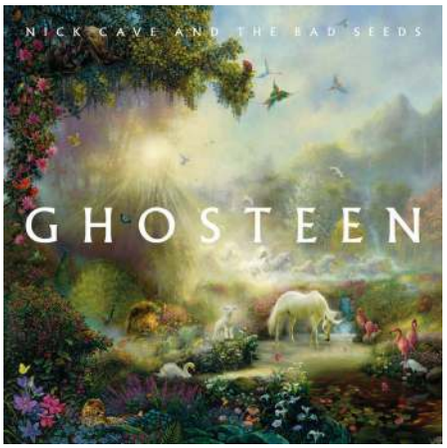


PENNIE SMITH ALEX BLACK JOHN DIETRICH DAVID CORIO/REDFERNS/GETTY



LONG LIVE VINYL

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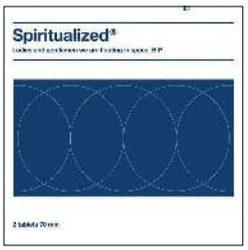
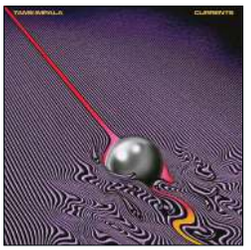
LONG LIVE VINYL

The *Long Live Vinyl* team's favourite double albums



GARY WALKER
Ladies & Gentlemen…
Spiritualized

GARY TIPP
Tago Mago
Can



TILDA HOWARD
Currents
Tame Impala

ANDY McGREGOR
…And Justice For All
Metallica

IAN PEEL
Welcome To The Pleasuredome
Frankie Goes To…

Meet our expert contributors…

SIMON RAYMONDE
Simon was the bassist and keyboard player in the Cocteau Twins; he's currently in Lost Horizons. He launched the independent label Bella Union in 1997. His label has been home to bands including Fleet Foxes, The Flaming Lips, Midlake, Father John Misty, John Grant, Explosions In The Sky and Lanterns On The Lake. He's also produced many great albums.

JOHN EARLS
In addition to writing about music for *Classic Pop*, *NME* and *The Daily Star*, John Earls was editor of Teletext's Planet Sound for a decade. He also writes about football, spends too much time on Twitter and is delighted that his new hometown in Bedfordshire has a decent record shop. There's even a bus that goes to Luton Town's ground, so his life is essentially sorted.

JONATHAN WRIGHT
Jonathan began writing about music in the late 80s. He's interviewed such singular talents as Shaun Ryder, Edwyn Collins and Richey Edwards. He's written for *The Guardian*, *Classic Pop* and many others. Jonathan edited *Adventure Rocketship! Let's All Go To The Science Fiction Disco*, a book of essays about the interface between geek culture and music.

DANIEL DYLAN WRAY
Daniel is a freelance music writer based in Sheffield. He writes for *The Guardian*, *VICE*, *Pitchfork*, *Uncut*, *The Quietus*, *Noisey* and several others. He will be forever poor because he spends too much money on records. He can be found playing records in Sheffield, often making small children cry by playing Einstürzende Neubauten on a Sunday afternoon in a pub.

PETE PAPHIDES
Pete bought his first record at the age of nine and has been a vinyl obsessive ever since, while writing for *Melody Maker*, *Q*, *Mojo*, *Time Out*, *The Times* and *The Guardian*. He is one of the UK's best known music journalists and has also written and presented documentaries for BBC Radio 4 and BBC 6 Music. You can catch him on Soho Radio every Tuesday, 12-2pm.

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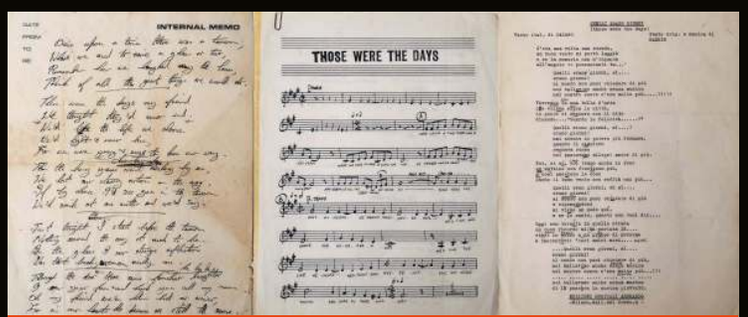

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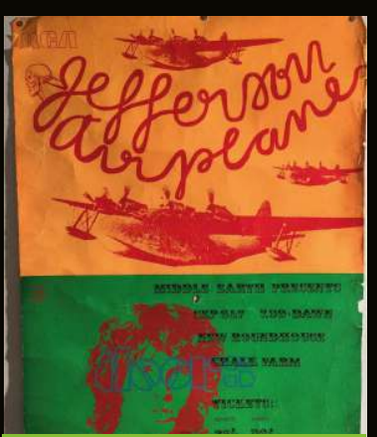

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On the record

Black Friday On My Mind

Reserve a space in your diary for 29 November and start saving for Record Store Day's sister event…

Black Friday is a recent retail phenomenon that is increasingly positioning itself at the front of the collective mind of UK shoppers. Originally a US tradition, the event always falls on the Friday after Thanksgiving; which means this year it takes place on 29 November. The deals on offer in the past have been dominated by consumer electronics, but since 2010 Record Store Day has also got in on the action – with a distinct twist.

Record Store Day Co-ordinator Megan Page explains: "In 2010, the organisers of RSD introduced RSD Black Friday; a sister event to April's main celebrations. Albeit, RSD Black Friday, but not Black Friday as you know it. RSD have worked to shift the perceived culture of the mass-produced, low as you can go event to instead offer music fans the chance to get a selection of exclusive and special releases ahead of Christmas!

"As Black Friday continues to grow in the UK, so too does RSD Black Friday. This means more and more artists are getting involved by releasing one-off, limited edition vinyl releases that you can't get anywhere else. It's also a nice antidote to the heavily commercialised and chaotic nature of Black Friday elsewhere."

A full list of this year's RSD Black Friday vinyl offerings is available on the Record Store Day website (www.recordstoreday.co.uk) and with more releases being added in the run-up to the event, it's worth keeping an eye out for news.

"It is an incredibly eclectic selection, with many more new releases coming out this year," explains Megan. "Similarly to Record Store Day in April, the list of vinyl represents the different cultures of the hundreds of participating stores all across the UK to offer something for everyone."

Highlights from this year's releases include a first time on vinyl for Lou Reed's Edgar Allan Poe concept album *The Raven* (2003) with guest vocals from David Bowie, together with Chet Baker's 1958 *(Chet Baker Sings) It Could Happen To You* and Miles Davis' 1964 *Miles In Tokyo,* plus Julia Kent's wonderful *Green And Grey* from 2011. Not forgetting the rarefied delights of *Sid Lives,* a double album of live gigs celebrating Sid Vicious' contribution to popular music.

Reissues aside, there are also some notable releases in terms of new music – with a Nick Lowe and Wilco split 7-inch single, Lizzo's *Coconut Oil* EP and jazz outfit The Comet Is Coming's *Afterlife* EP among many others.

Discogs TRENDING CHART

THE TOP 10 TRENDING VINYL RELEASES FROM THE DISCOGS COMMUNITY THIS MONTH

10 *Breadcrumbs EP* Alice Cooper
9 *Igor* Tyler, The Creator
8 *Free* Iggy Pop
7 *None More Negative* Type O Negative
6 *Massive Attack vs Mad Professor* Massive Attack vs Mad Professor
5 *Why Me? Why Not* Liam Gallagher
4 *How I Got Over* The Roots
3 *The Soft Bulletin* The Flaming Lips
2 *The Freedom Rider* Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers
1 *Ode To Joy* Wilco

Official Vinyl Albums Chart OCTOBER 2019

10 *Rumours* Fleetwood Mac
9 *Without Fear* Dermot Kennedy
8 *Breadcrumbs EP* Alice Cooper
7 *Definitely Maybe* Oasis
6 *Nine* Blink-182
5 *Cause And Effect* Keane
4 *Beneath The Eyrie* Pixies
3 *Hypersonic Missiles* Sam Fender
2 *Abbey Road* The Beatles
1 *Why Me? Why Not* Liam Gallagher

AKSHAY CHAUHAN

The Selecter

Long Live Vinyl's essential picks for the month ahead

FACTORY RECORDS T-SHIRT

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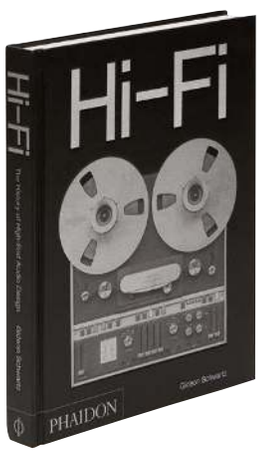
www.future-past.co.uk

Having been treated to a pair of new Factory Records boxsets, next up to mark the equally famous and infamous Manchester label's 40th anniversary is a range of more than a dozen FAC51 T-shirts. The uber cool, official designs are the work of Future Past Clothing and celebrate the legendary Haçienda nightclub.



HI-FI: THE HISTORY OF HIGH-END AUDIO DESIGN

£65

www.uk.phaidon.com

In an increasingly digital world, this luxury coffee table book by Gideon Schwartz lovingly chronicles the evolution of analogue hi-fi gear from 1950 to the present day. It's effectively a hardback catalogue of high-end hi-fi porn. Prepare for the inevitable feeling that your own setup needs upgrading.

WXAXRXP SESSIONS

£120

www.warp.net

This lavish hinged box of 10 12-inches marks the 30th anniversary of London ambient adventurers Warp Records with a series of sessions from the label's history. The packaging, designed by Michael Oswell, is suitably luxuriant, too.

PRO-JECT VC-S MK2 RECORD CLEANER

£349

www.project-audio.com

After returning from Utrecht with a haul of black gold, you're going to need to do some cleaning. Pro-Ject's updated Mark 2 incarnation of its popular VC-S vacuum cleaner can handle up to 1,500 records. It has an improved arm, clamp and chassis and its long-life brush gets deep into the grooves, breathing new life into your LPs.

URBAN EDITIONS RECORD STORAGE

£69-£1,360

www.theurbaneditions.com

When it comes to storing your records, there's nothing wrong with the good old IKEA Kallax, but Urban Editions' new minimalist range made from beautiful solid hardwoods takes it to the next level. Their oak, walnut and ash units can be tailored to fit your space with options for cable storage, panels, doors and drawers.

MEGA RECORD & CD FAIR, UTRECHT

€12.50

www.recordplanet.nl

The world's biggest record fair takes place in Utrecht on November 16-17. It features more than 500 dealers from all over the globe. The 52nd edition of this twice-annual pilgrimage for record collectors also features live bands and a rare vinyl sale from our friends at Omega Auctions. Get yourself over to the easyJet website and raid the piggy bank.

Wantlists.net

Work In Progress

ANDY SHAUF

THE NEON SKYLINE **ANTI- RECORDS** 24 JANUARY 2020

My new album is... *The Neon Skyline*

The sessions... started in a room that I rented from Lido Pimienta. It was below a music store and I could hear people learning piano and violin until the evening, when I would start to work. Violin lessons were particularly painful. I eventually got my own little garage studio space in Toronto and became nocturnal while I worked on the album.

I worked with... well, no one until it came time to mix the record. I really wanted this album to be more focused on the cores of the songs, so I decided to have less instrumentation than on my last album. I spent a lot of time trying to simplify arrangements to keep the songs focused on the contents of the lyrics rather than the embellishments that lay around them.

I used... three tape machines! I was having a real problem with my tape machines breaking down on me… The final breakthrough moment was when I acquired a Tascam 388. It simplified my workflow and the sound had a really specific richness to it. I went through many different recordings of almost identical arrangements of each song, but the only ones that felt right were done on the 388. Recording on tape by yourself is tricky, but not when using the Tascam 388 (Tascam didn't pay me to say that…).

I was inspired... by the songwriters of the 70s. Neil Young's *Live At Massey Hall 1971* was an album I was listening to a lot at the time. The way those songs were written makes them perfect for just guitar and vocal; I wanted the songs to be able to stand in the same kind of way. Most times, the arrangement sort of plays in my head as I'm writing the frame of the song, so I was trying to get away from that. Less leaning on the arrangements and more on the skeleton of the songs.

I learnt... that that is a very hard thing to accomplish… and that it's impossible to know whether or not you have. I'm really proud of the arrangements on my previous album, *The Party*, but I think that *The Neon Skyline* was almost more difficult to arrange because I was trying to use fewer instruments. I learned that less can be more difficult than more.

Playing these songs live... is going to be really enjoyable, I think. Any time you get to play new material, it's enjoyable. You end up finding out which songs people connect to and which moments people anticipate. I think these songs are the most lively that I've ever written, so it should be a fun time.

You'd be surprised to know that... the last song (*Changer*) on the album was on the chopping block for almost the entire time that I was writing the album. I originally recorded it in my apartment so that I could test out a new spring reverb that I'd just bought. It was one of those songs that you end up writing in about three minutes and think nothing of it, but in my opinion, it ended up being one of the more important songs on the album.

COLIN MEDLEY

Lost Shops

#6 HAROLD MOORES RECORDS

When Harold Moores Records closed in early 2017, it spelt the end of an era: HMR was the last specialist classical record shop in London's West End and its absence leaves a big hole. Situated on Soho's Great Marlborough Street, Moores was founded by an Australian classical enthusiast in the 1970s and, until he sold the shop in 2010, Harold was a regular, loud presence. New stock, largely CD but also LPs, was on the ground floor, while a basement full of used LPs (and some 78s) generated heat. As Harold sourced collections, including that of Christopher Lee, you could often find fascinating LPs. My greatest find was a Russian soundtrack to an odd Soviet attempt at making a spaghetti Western on the Steppes, and my love for East European music kept me digging in the basement. For the serious classical collector, Moores was the number one shop in London. Harold knew the worth of different pressings, just as nearby Reckless Records knows its classic rock. Moores attracted collectors from across the spectrum: Aphex Twin was rumoured to dig there for obscure musique concrete LPs. After Harold sold up, the shop went into a brief partnership with Mole Jazz then focused again on classical. Sadly, rising rents forced the shop to close and another Soho gem was gone. *Garth Cartwright*

Simon says

SIMON RAYMONDE

The 30th anniversary of Cocteau Twins' much-loved *Heaven Or Las Vegas* is fast approaching. Our former Cocteau columnist reflects on its creation

More than likely, it will be a day that just passes by in as similarly a mundane and unspectacular way as most of the days that precede it, but come 17 September next year, 30 years will have passed since the release of *Heaven Or Las Vegas* and I will likely spend some moments in deep reflection about what many people regard as our finest record.

Certainly, it was the most 'successful' by the traditional ways of measuring success, and there are a number of reasons for that, a whole raft of stuff that all came together in the year leading up to its release, and most of it as usual, by accident.

While I had been in the Cocteau Twins for six years at this point, I still felt a bit of an outsider, the new boy, the spare wheel. Three *is* a magic number, but it was, for a while at least, a complex balance being part of the dynamic of both a band *and* a relationship. For those who don't know, at this point in the band's career, Elizabeth Fraser and Robin Guthrie were a 'couple'. We were all close because of how much we cared about our music and how special we knew it could be.

Having made all the records up to this point at a scattered selection of recording studios and homemade set-ups, in 1989 we moved into Pete Townshend's studio when we discovered he was looking to move out. This was a key moment in our lives.

The new studio space, and all the gadgets we had accumulated were all that Robin needed. He had that child's wide-eyed wonder in the studio that reminded me of Josh Baskin being let loose in the Macmillan Toy Company in *Big*. It would become a mission for him to make this album sound exactly like he heard it in his head. It was my job to do whatever I could to help him get there. Many strive to get that 'sound' out, and on this album Robin achieved a level of above-and-beyond dedication to the art of producing a record.

I loved writing music with Robin. For all our obvious differences, we were extremely compatible and comfortable writing partners. I know many musicians in bands find it hard to co-write in the same room at the same time. Mick Harvey has spoken about how he hated doing it in The Birthday Party and The Bad Seeds and avoided it whenever he could, but we loved it, and for a few years couldn't get enough of it.

Across all the albums, both Robin and I played all the guitars, bass and pianos, and this freedom was vital, especially on *Heaven Or Las Vegas*. Yet as far as 'the sound' of this album goes, the lion's share of the credit should go to Robin. I doubt I will ever find a musician that I have that intuitive connection with, those times are precious and we know it. I do.

Moving into this beautiful studio with our own equipment and instruments, overlooking the River Thames and less than a mile from our homes, meant that the demands of parenthood, new to Elizabeth and Robin, and imminent to me, could hopefully fit in smoothly to our recording plans. It certainly appeared to affect the writing in a very positive way. There is a euphoric joy in Elizabeth's writing on tracks like *Pitch The Baby, Wolf In The Breast* and *Iceblink Luck* that followed her becoming a mother for the first time, yet tragically, in the same moment I lost my beloved father Ivor to cancer, and this profoundly affected the songwriting again.

It was Robin's mission to make the album sound exactly like he heard it in his head

I wrote the music to *Frou-Frou Foxes In Midsummer Fires* the day I came back to work after his funeral, and in the moment after I sat down at the piano alone in the studio, it all flooded out of me. *I Wear Your Ring* followed and this song still destroys me to this day. The mixture of melancholy and delight, me reflecting on my father's death, and Elizabeth joyous as a mother of her first child, must have given the album a truly unique feeling.

Our songwriting throughout our years together was unconventional. Without getting too deep into it, Robin and I would create 'finished' instrumentals, so they sounded like mixed tracks with the vocals taken out. Except the vocals hadn't been done yet!

Yet while these 'instrumentals' sounded wonderful, hypnotic and spacey to our ears at three in the morning, until the genius of Elizabeth Fraser joined the party, they were just that, great-sounding instrumentals. Her vocal layering was so unique at this time because she could have several styles and 'voices' all within the one song, and from her era really only Kate Bush was experimenting in that kind of way. It always felt like she was adding more depth and colour to each character with every layer.

When we finally called it a day in 1997, several years after Robin and Elizabeth had done the same as a couple, over a third of my life had been dedicated to this band, and now seeing how fondly *Heaven Or Las Vegas* is considered by music lovers of all ages, it fills me with warmth that I was part of this special moment in the band's history.

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The Big Question

Addressing Vinyl's Most Pressing Issues

Why do we collect vinyl?

There are many motivations behind the compulsion to collect vinyl. We ask an eminent crate-digging psychologist to explain

Dr Mark Griffiths is a psychologist focusing on the field of addiction. As a Government advisor, he has had more than 1,200 articles published on the subject. He is also the proud owner of a vast music collection. So, if anybody is uniquely placed to answer questions about the psychology surrounding collecting vinyl it's Mark.

We asked him about his own obsession. "People always say to me, 'What's the difference between an enthusiasm and an addiction?' My answer is that enthusiasms add to life, while addictions take away from it. Music is an enhancement to my life."

But why does collecting play such an important part in some people's lives? "Of the reasons put forward for collecting, one is that it's an extension of self, another is that people do it for social reasons, in the sense that they are keen to share their experiences with other like-minded people.

"Another theory put forward," says Mark, "is they're preserving history, creating a sense of continuity. A guy called Russell Belk, probably the world's best-known psychologist on collecting, says it can be an addiction or an obsession for some people. It all depends how you define addiction. Although I call myself a music obsessive, there aren't any negative effects on my life. Other than my partner saying it takes up too much space.

"My music is an extension of me. Being an academic, it's that collation of things. What I really like is when I complete a set of something, when I know I've got everything by an artist it gives me a great deal of satisfaction. So, with me it's partly about the extension of personality and self and it's partly the completist side."

Completism is a strong urge among vinyl collectors. Mark is no different, but struggles to pinpoint the precise psychological reasons for wanting to own every recording by a particular performer: "It's hard to say. Artists like John Foxx, Ultravox, Bauhaus… I print off discographies and go through with my yellow highlighter ticking off everything. I'm a massive Velvet Underground fan, I go through and highlight everything I've got. It's an immense feeling of pleasure when you've completed things. My partner's mother always says to me, 'you'll never have time to listen to all those records', but that's not the issue. It's more the knowing that I've got them.

Dr Mark Griffiths is a Velvet Underground completist as well as one of the leading experts on the psychology of collecting

"I'm very proud of my Velvet Underground bootleg collection and will pay top dollar for really poor-quality bootlegs because I want the music."

Yet in today's digital age isn't the need for ownership an out-dated concept? "I like the physical artefact and hate it when an artist releases on MP3-only. I suppose it's that element of feeling you're unique, having something that most people won't have," answers Mark, as the barely disguised vinyl fan-boy he clearly is. "Most people are only into one or two artists, but as a completist, I've got about 30. That's one of the reasons I get less and less into new bands now."

Somewhere, it's written that Freud attributes obsessive completism to inadequate potty training. Is there any truth in that? "It's rubbish. One of my main areas is gambling addiction and Freud says that gambling is an unconscious substitution for masturbation. There's absolutely no evidence for that whatsoever." And with our interview over, Mark reached for his highlighter and pressed 'print' on his latest discography.

The Completist

PETE PAPHIDES

Before his career as a music journalist Pete was the 'chief' writer for The Four Faces Of Eve, a juvenile pretend band whose debut single could have been huge… had it actually existed

Last month saw the second National Album Day and, as you might expect, thousands of people took to social media to sing the praises of their favourite LPs. It was all rather lovely (if a bit "Crikey, are some people really just planning to keep yabbering about the first Stone Roses album all the way to their graves?") but for me the indisputable highlight was the Twitter feed of record collector and mastermind of Sainsbury's short-lived Own Brand vinyl imprint Pete Selby, who took the opportunity to draw attention to a host of albums that don't actually exist.

"Between the ages of 8-15," he explained, "I created a miniature record collection documenting my musical discography that never was or never could be."

The photographs accompanying his tweet were a portal into an interior world I recognised all too well. The young Pete had an imaginary band called Orbit, for whom he went to great lengths to create album sleeves with titles and track names. Obviously we'll never know what music Orbit would have made in the real world, but an aesthetic of sorts revealed itself in the artwork of 'Pretending You Don't Know Anyone', which featured a ghostly face emerging through a haze of horizontal lines rendered in black and blue biro ink. Judging from the more sophisticated sleeve image of 'Monday's Child', an impassive cyborg facing away into an empty sky, Orbit evolved into a conceptually weighty neo-prog outfit, who would almost certainly have gone on to be cited by Steven "Porcupine Tree" Wilson as an influence.

If Pete's cute fantasy projects and memories of my own juvenile pretend album – 'Beyond The Realms of Reality' by The Four Faces Of Eve – are anything to go by, I think that a lot of us probably got up to this sort of thing. The holy grail of all such undertakings was to make them look as close to something that had emerged all shiny and new out of a pressing plant as was humanly possible. In order to achieve this effect, I would visit my local record shop Easy Listening and get them to give me record sleeves from window displays that they no longer needed. I'd carefully rip them apart at the seams, turn them inside-out and effectively give myself a blank sleeve on which to go to work.

One evening, I went straight from school to pick up a bunch of surplus sleeves of singles by arty synth-duo Eddie & Sunshine. By the time I was finished with them, one of those sleeves had become 'Mercury', the debut single by The Four Faces Of Eve (whose name, in case you're wondering, had been taken from a strip in popular girls' comic *Misty*). 'Mercury' had been inspired by a science lesson that day in which our teacher Mr Henderson told us that the human body is unable to expel mercury once it enters its system.

Letting myself run loose with the metaphor, I wrote out the entire lyric to 'Mercury' on the back of the sleeve, earnestly explaining, "This song is called 'Mercury' because it's about a man who can't get someone out of their system. P PAPHIDES, CHIEF WRITER, THE FOUR FACES OF EVE." Yes, I think it's fair to say I was pretty proud of that one.

Sometimes I wonder why Pete and I were choosing to try to replicate records instead of tapes. And I think that, paradoxically, the answer lies in the fact that you knew you could never quite pull it off unless you had access to a pressing plant and the accompanying printing equipment. If it was never quite the same with tapes, that's because you could tape an LP, but you couldn't LP a tape. Therefore,

I'd visit my local record shop and get them to give me record sleeves they no longer needed

Pete Paphides is a music journalist, record collector and broadcaster. Catch him on Soho Radio every Tuesday, 12-2pm

records were proper in a way that tapes could never be. I remember watching *The Big Time* documentary in 1981, where we got to see Scottish pop hopeful Sheena Easton plucked from obscurity to audition for EMI. The entire process seemed a bit demeaning and grubby. Poor Sheena being styled, commodified and paraded before industry experts who didn't seem to like her very much. But it all seemed worthwhile the moment we saw those records having the standard beige and red EMI labels slapped onto their centres. That was amazing.

From next year though, it looks as if today's teenage record fetishists will be able to finish off the job in a way Pete and I could have only dreamed of. Three days after National Album Day, a group of European designers launched a crowdfunder for a new "idiot-proof" home vinyl-pressing machine. For $1,100, you could own the PhonoCut and press up to 15 minutes of audio on each side of a blank disc. How amazing would that be?

In one sense, it's the stuff of dreams, which is why the crowdfunder smashed past its target in less than 24 hours. And yet, in another sense, well… I think what I always loved about records is that, well… they're the stuff of dreams. You can't just make them yourself. Like Mars bars, instant coffee and the magazine you hold in your very hands, their beauty is tied up in the fact that they're mass-produced, and smoother and shinier than anything that humans are able to make without the help of machines. If Pete and I had been able to leave our make-believe worlds and fully realise our dreams of making real-life records by Orbit and The Four Faces Of Eve, I wonder if the game would have held such appeal in the first place.

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Fabs Fans Get New 45s Box

Complete Beatles singles collection hits shops just in time for Christmas

A new Beatles boxset due for release on 22 November collects all 23 of the band's singles, including a new double A-side 7-inch pressing of mid-90s releases *Free As A Bird* and *Real Love*.

The Singles Collection consists of 46 tracks, 29 of which didn't appear on albums, cut from the original mono and stereo master tapes by Sean Magee at Abbey Road and accompanied by a 40-page book of photos and essays by Beatles historian Kevin Howlett.

All of the singles, starting with 1962's *Love Me Do*, come in reproduced picture sleeves from countries around the world. The boxset is available to pre-order through Apple for an eye-watering £187.99. In other 'just take our money' news, Richard Hawley's Setanta back catalogue has finally been given a vinyl reissue, with *Coles Corner*, *Truelove's Gutter* and *Lady's Bridge* returning to record shop shelves alongside Hawley's more recent catalogue.

5,333

The price in dollars that a copy of the 1969 Rolling Stones Radio Promotion Album sold for recently on Discogs. Only 200 copies of the sampler were pressed.

MOTOWN IN MONO

Motown's birthday celebrations continue with the *Motown In Mono* series: The Four Tops' *Reach Out*, The Marvelettes' *Sophisticated Soul*, The Miracles' *You've Really Got A Hold On Me*, Diana Ross & The Supremes' *Reflections*, and The Temptations' *The Temptations Sing Smokey* are out on 8 November.

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4 OF A KIND... Dairy products

JELLYFISH
SPILT MILK
Devoted fans of the US power-poppers were left in tears as the band split soon after the release of their second album, but there was no use crying over it.

WEEN
CHOCOLATE & CHEESE
Ween's fourth studio album saw the US rockers couple the popular brown confectionery item with the coagulated dairy product.

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART
ICE CREAM FOR CROW
Don Van Vliet's outfit could have qualified for this list with debut album *Safe As Milk*, but secured an entry with the much-consumed frozen dessert.

CREAM
FRESH CREAM
Rock's first supergroup were clearly dairy product fans, and named their debut album after the anglicised version of crème fraîche.

Coming Soon...

OUR PICK OF THE NEW VINYL RELEASES

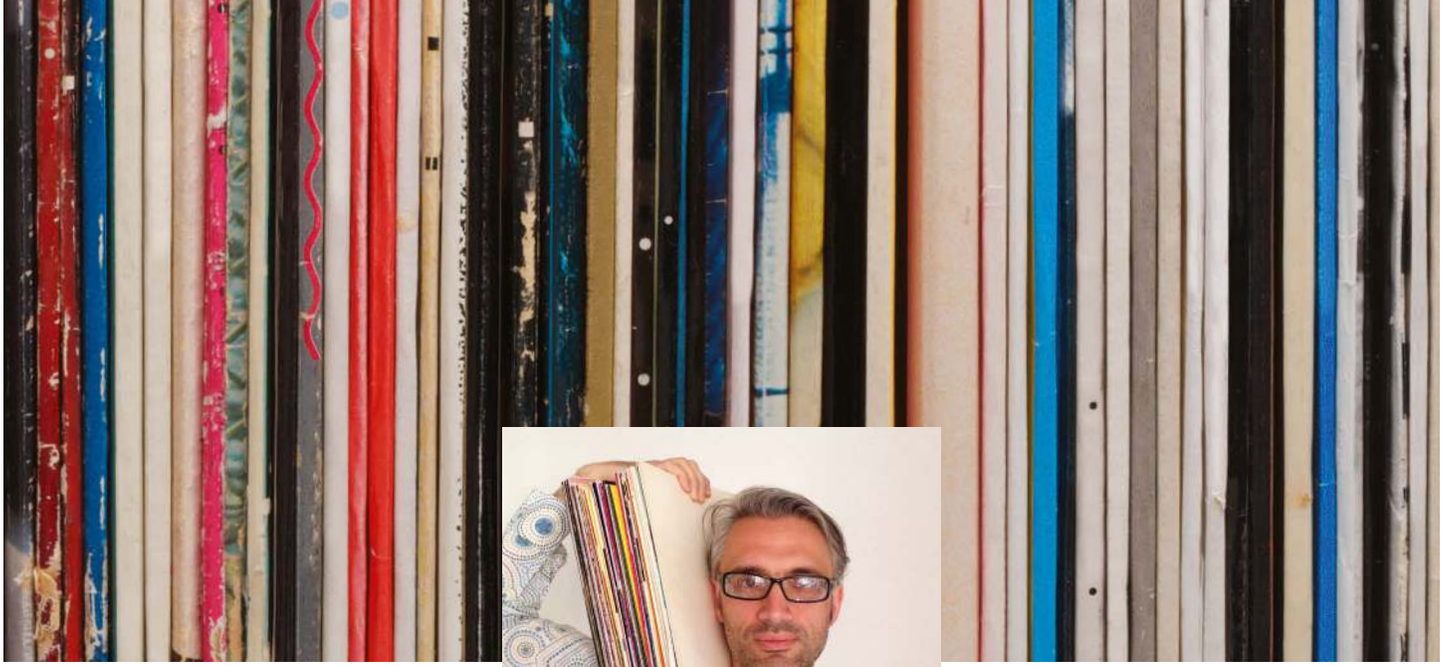
8 NOVEMBER
Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, *Ghosteen* (Ghosteen Inc); Girl Ray, *Girl* (Moshi Moshi); Kele, *2042* (Kola); The Script, *Sunsets & Full Moons* (Sony); FKA Twigs, *Magdalene* (Young Turks); Soundwalk Collective With Patti Smith, *Mummer Love* (Bella Union); Luke Combes, *What You See Is What You Get* (Relentless); Lucy Dacus, *2019* (Matador); Xylouris White, *The Sisypheans* (Drag City)

15 NOVEMBER
INXS, *Live Baby Live Wembley Stadium* (Petrol Records); DJ Shadow, *Our Pathetic Age* (Mass Appeal); Tindersticks, *No Treasure But Hope* (City Slang); Juliana Hatfield, *Juliana Hatfield Sings The Police* (American Laundromat); Ryuichi Sakamoto & Alva Noto, *Two* (Noton); Bonnie Prince Billy, *I Made A Place* (Domino); Toy, *Songs Of Consumption* (Tough Love); Dog In The Snow, *Vanishing Lands* (Bella Union)

22 NOVEMBER
Leonard Cohen, *Thanks For The Dance* (Columbia); The Who, *WHO* (Polydor); Omar Souleyman, *Shlon* (Mad Decent)

29 NOVEMBER
Beans On Toast, *The Inevitable Train Wreck* (Bot Music)

6 DECEMBER
Yann Tiersen, *Portrait* (Mute); IDLES, *A Beautiful Thing: IDLES Live at Le Bataclan* (Partisan); Various Artists, *Odyssey: The Sound Of Ivor Raymonde Vol 2* (Bella Union); Will Samson, *Paralanguage* (Wichita)



IAN PEEL'S
LINER NOTES

OMD just published a book tracing their history through concerts. But there's an equally emotive story to be told through vinyl

Of all the rock biogs I've read this year, Richard Houghton's *Pretending To See The Future* has been one of the most absorbing. It takes a painstaking gig-by-gig approach to tracing the history of Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, from those that were on the stage, and those that were in the audience. It's a great angle to cover what many initially considered a studio band in a live context. Or to think about electronic music (which, before home taping, was "killing music", we were told) from the perspective of concerts as opposed to tracks.

I've seen OMD in concert many times, and at pivotal moments in their history, but my experience of the band has really been through vinyl. And I think you can picture their story through the lens of vinyl and get just as much of an intriguing, emotional resonance as with live concerts.

Here's a great example. Their 1988 single *Dreaming* presented OMD on the front cover as the core duo that had been there from the start: Paul Humphreys and Andy McCluskey. But there was just one thing, they'd run their natural course (at least until a reformation more than a decade later) and were on the verge of splitting up. So how appropriate was it that the 7" vinyl in "limited edition special fold-out sleeve" was like a reverse gatefold that literally 'split' duo, and the front cover right down the middle?

Fast forward to 1991 and OMD, by then revolving around just McCluskey, had a massive hit album in the form of *Sugar Tax*, but the vinyl copy carried an interesting subtext. All mention of Andy had been removed at his behest from the credits, in favour of simply the name "OMD", so nervous was he about the fans accepting any LP from a new line-up.

I started seeing Peter Saville's mesmeric 'lozenge' pattern everywhere

Then there are the albums from the desolate, non-vinyl era, like *Navigation* and the *Peel Sessions*. Their absence from the format being a silent commentary on the world's changing tastes and outlook.

There are many more examples, such as Dep 2, aka the incongruously-titled 1978 *Tapes* (which was available only on vinyl for many years). Or the 'lozenge sleeve' debut album which, by the time I started seeing Peter Saville's mesmeric pattern everywhere (even on Poundland laundry baskets!), became the subject of an article I wrote for *The Guardian* more than 10 years ago.

A great example to end on is how vinyl gave the group's 1993 single *Stand Above Me* an injection of club credibility, using that well known 'white label pseudonym' trick (which I'll come back to in a future Liner Notes).

"*Stand Above Me* was white-labelled first," recalled McCluskey's producer and co-writer Phil Coxon for a detailed overview of the era on the Electricity Club website. "(But Virgin Records) thought that if a trendy, hip DJ says "what's this record?", picks it up, and it's got OMD on it, it's very likely he's going to put it back down. So it was put out as *Stand Above Me* by The Liberator and it worked – it fooled them all!"

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THE VINYLIST BRYAN WOOLLEY

The King started it all for this dedicated rock 'n' roll collector

What was the first record you bought?
"The first record I can definitely remember buying was *Hound Dog* (Elvis of course), a reissue that was 50p in a second-hand record shop in Ilkeston, in Derbyshire. I was about nine or 10 and my grandma gave me the money!"

Which artists and genres are you most interested in?
"Mainly, I collect rock 'n' roll and 60s music, and my favoured medium is the 45rpm single, with particular emphasis on EPs, picture sleeves and American records, since there were so many that weren't issued over here. I also have a thing for more strange and unusual items, like advertising flexidiscs, and those playable postcards and greetings cards you could get in the 50s and 60s. They are lovely, quirky items that have not received that much attention from collectors."

How many records do you have?
"I must have around 3,000 singles and around 1,500 LPs, but strangely only around 100 CDs, plus a couple of hundred 78s, and a few dozen of the aforementioned flexidiscs/postcards, etc."

What's the most valuable record in your collection?
"I have an American promotional picture sleeve of *Right Now/The Night Is So Lonely* by Gene Vincent, which the *Goldmine* guide to 45rpm singles says is worth around $1,500. It cost me 10 quid! I do keep thinking about getting it appraised, so I know for sure."

What's the holy grail record that you'd most like to own?

"An Elvis Sun single, or perhaps all of them. A Robert Johnson 78. Nowadays, though, I think less about individual items than just generally having a great selection of rare rockabilly or garage-band 45s to own and play. Plus more advertising records from around the world. I don't know enough about them to name a holy grail yet!"

What's your listening setup?
"For every-day use, I have an Ion turntable that I have connected to a 1980s JVC stack system (minus the turntable). It looks a bit eccentric, but sounds great. I also have an early-80s Toshiba music centre that has just been overhauled and is wonderful to play records on. Also, I have a small collection of vintage record players (Dansette, Pye Black Box) for 78s and nostalgic listening."

MOST VALUABLE VINYL

99

THE CLASH
SUPER BLACK MARKET CLASH
Scarce 1993 UK 25-track 3x10" vinyl set, including *Cheat, Deny, Jail Guitar Doors, Pressure Drop, The Prisoner* and *This Is Radio Clash*. Glossy picture sleeve with illustrated inners.
£75

TINDERSTICKS
MARBLES
Rare 1993 UK limited edition 4-track 10" vinyl EP, also including *Joe Stumble, For Those...* and *Benn*. Individually numbered wraparound picture sleeve with picture insert, limited to just 2,000 copies. TIPPY-CHÉ002.
£50

ELO
TICKET TO THE MOON
Scarce 1981 UK limited edition AA-sided 12" picture disc single, also including *Here Is The News*, both taken from the album *Time*. JETP12018.
£40

THE TRAVELING WILBURYS
END OF THE LINE
Rare 1989 UK limited edition 12" vinyl single including an extended version and *Congratulations*, presented in a picture sleeve featuring original hype sticker and complete with original sheet of stickers. W7637TW.
£35

Now Spinning

We've been enjoying this month's essential tracks with a few bottles of Decca Records' 90th birthday Supreme Session Ale from the Portobello Brewing Company

Train In Vain **The Clash** (Sony)
Disco Peanuts **Warmduscher** (The Leaf Label)
All This Music Must Fade **The Who** (Polydor)
Confessions **Sudan Archives** (Stones Throw)
Hissing Waves **The Leaf Library** (WIAIWYA)
Rolling Rocks **Michael Kiwanuka** (Polydor)
Swaying **Vetiver** (Loose Music)
Home With You **FKA Twigs** (Young Turks)
New Memory Box **Bonnie Prince Billy** (Domino)
Fool's Gold **Lucy Dacus** (Matador)
Puppets **Leonard Cohen** (Sony)
Ghosteen **Nick Cave** (Ghosteen Ltd)
Monkey Man **The Rolling Stones** (Abkco)

Vault Of Heaven

HMV has just opened a new flagship store in Birmingham, called HMV Vault

Previously home to an IKEA warehouse (yes, it's that big), The Vault is set to stock over 25,000 albums on vinyl. It is a bold confirmation of HMV's commitment to vinyl and also its faith in the UK high street. The Vault is one of the biggest bricks-and-mortar music and entertainment stores in the world.

Doug Putman, owner of HMV, said: "The HMV Vault has been built with the needs of the modern music and film fan at its heart, with a permanent live performance space and an unparalleled range catering to the full breadth of our customers' tastes."

SHADOW LANDS

DJ Shadow returns on 15 November with his sixth album, *Our Pathetic Age*. The first half of the record is largely instrumental, with Nas, Ghostface Killah, Raekwon, Paul Banks (Interpol), Run The Jewels, De La Soul, Pusha T and Loyle Carner among the contributors on the second half.

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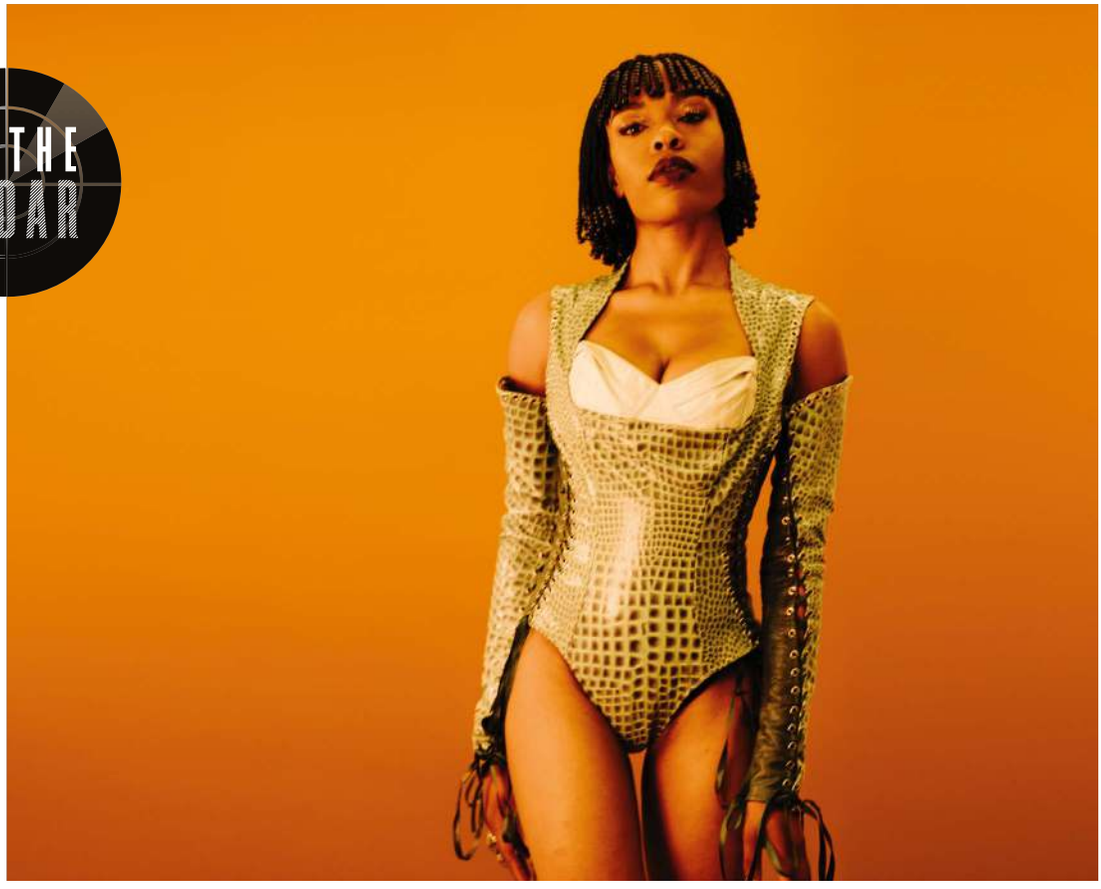

SUDAN ARCHIVES

The LA-based songstress tells **Jonathan Wright** about her striking debut album

There are times when things fall into place. Not so long ago, Sudan Archives was thinking of quitting her job making doughnuts and going out as a busker. Thankfully, risking penury didn't prove necessary. Instead, her unique music, built around beats, violin and Sudan's acutely observed songwriting, started to gain traction. Life began to move fast.

"When I got a booking agent, the first thing they booked me on was Coachella," she says, "so it just seemed like everything was cranked to the max in the snap of a finger." Her appearance at the California festival was in 2018 and things have barely slowed since. Following two acclaimed EPs – *Sudan Archives* (2017) and *Sink* (2018) – Sudan's debut album, *Athena*, is released in November.

If some of the tracks on the EPs have a skeletal, sketchy quality, *Athena* is a rich, multi-layered R&B album, commercial yet psychedelic. "The main step I wanted was *quality*," she laughs. "It definitely has that. It feels lush and well made, like a Mercedes car!"

To achieve this, she worked with producers such as Wilma Archer (Jessie Ware, Nilüfer Yanya) and Rodaidh McDonald (The XX, Sampha), yet the distinctiveness of the album is down to Sudan. The songs, she says, are "up-front", they express her "dark and light sides", and they're as "revealing", she jokes, as the album cover, where she poses as a Greek goddess sculpted in bronze.

Going back, Sudan's musicality is rooted in making music in church as a child, and in the time a group passed through town playing Irish jigs. "It was upbeat and wild," she remembers. "I really liked that kind of music, I guess, because I just got a violin after that."

Raised in Cincinnati, she moved to LA after resisting the efforts of her stepfather, Derrick Ladd, whose career included working at urban label LaFace, to push her towards being in a pop duo with her twin sister. "Maybe it seemed like I was rebelling and sneaking out at night," she says, "but I was really sneaking out to go check out some electronic shows, of people being a self-produced act."

While she collects records these days, Sudan began to find her own way towards some unusual music via the internet, notably north-east African violin music and Cameroonian composer Francis Bebey (1929-2001). "I don't know how, but I just started collecting a whole bookmarked list of all these crazy string instruments around the world," she says. Seeing other self-taught musicians gave her confidence a tremendous boost because "even though I'm not exactly the most technical violinist, I feel like I've got a lot of expression."

The next stage is taking her songs on the road. "I like the idea of imitating the visual of a violin recital, a piano and a violinist," she says. And maybe Sudan will be doing this for a long time, judging by her answer when *LLV* asks what she would constitute as success. "Wouldn't it be funny if I made this album and I could just tour my whole life off of one album? 'She doesn't need to make any music ever again because *she's the shit*'." And she laughs, uproariously.

ALEX BLACK

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UNIVERSAL MUSIC

CRATE DIGGING WITH... GARY KEMP

As Spandau Ballet reissue their 1984 classic pop album *Parade* on coral-coloured vinyl for its 35th anniversary, **John Earls** goes digging with guitarist and songwriter Gary Kemp

MILES DAVIS
KIND OF BLUE
"For me, the smell of vinyl is synonymous with the sound of jazz. *Kind Of Blue* is the first proper prog record: it's a jam of taking a few chords and cycling over the top of them. The whole of later rock wouldn't have happened without this record. I prefer the modernist Miles in Italian-cut suits."

ROXY MUSIC
FOR YOUR PLEASURE
"I love some later Roxy, but to me it has to be when Brian Eno was in the band. Roxy Music is quite art school at times. While *For Your Pleasure* is musical latex, it's tight as a drum. It has sexuality, pizazz and there's a decadence to it. The covers to those early albums were so important."

THE BEATLES
ABBEY ROAD
"My favourite Beatles album. The conceptual thematic of Side Two is extraordinary. I enjoy Giles Martin's remixes and I love the outtakes on the new boxset: the development of the songs, their ability to sing live in the studio… It makes you realise what an amazing live band they would've been."

LOU REED
TRANSFORMER
To me as a kid, David Bowie was the maître d', welcoming me into a New York world of wonder. He and Mick Ronson did a brilliant job producing some of Lou Reed's best songs here. At an awards show once, I went up to Lou Reed's table and said hello. He gave me a shrug that said: 'Fuck off'."

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
LIEGE AND LIEF
"There was a big folk revival among the kids at my grammar school. There's a rock element here, but less so than their earlier albums, and *Come All Ye* is still one of the best feelgood songs. I love Richard Thompson's guitar and I don't really dabble in Fairport without him."

THE FACES
A NOD IS AS GOOD AS A WINK... TO A BLIND HORSE
"I never get bored of this, there's so much fun and frivolity here. *Stay With Me* is the best Rolling Stones song they never wrote and *Debris* is one of my all-time favourite songs. It's a very working-class, very London album. It's the soundtrack to me as a kid."

HUMBLE PIE
PERFORMANCE ROCKIN' THE FILLMORE
"This is one of Humble Pie's biggest-selling records, and it's interesting how Peter Frampton went on to make the biggest-selling live album ever. That speaks about his brilliant guitar playing: it's full of an energy that was never captured in the studio."

DAVID BOWIE
ALADDIN SANE
"*Aladdin Sane* is the record for my pubescent youth. There's a sexuality to *Aladdin Sane* that wasn't quite there with *Ziggy* – some of those songs have an identity crisis and don't know which camp they're in: 'camp' being the operative word. Mick Ronson is at his absolute best, too."

YES
CLOSE TO THE EDGE
"At my school, I was in the Bowie 'n' Rod camp, but I wanted to be in the prog one too, as the prog kids tended to come from bigger houses with bookshelves. Vinyl is at its best with prog, as prog bands would maximise its capacity, writing songs like classical movements to fill a side of vinyl."

PINK FLOYD
THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN
"It's where I am at the moment, playing guitar with Nick Mason's *Saucerful Of Secrets*. *Interstellar Overdrive* is such a punk riff, yet it goes into the most extraordinary atonal jazz freakout, while the found sound of *Astronomy Domine* is so daring."

DENIS O'REGAN

#31 DJ Shadow
ENDTRODUCING

For an album that is ostensibly an enduring love letter to the art of crate digging, it's entirely fitting that *Endtroducing*'s cover was shot in a record shop – DJ Shadow's local store, Rare Records in Sacramento. Shadow suggested to Irish photographer Brian Cross, aka B+, that they head to the shop for the shoot and he captured the cover image on his manual-focus Fuji 617.

While the blurred motion could be seen as representing the digger's voracious appetite for vinyl, the whole thing was a happy accident, including the feline guest appearance (pictured on the left-hand side of the gatefold): "We measured the focus really quickly because of the cat and we measured in feet when it's set for metres," said Cross. "That's why the foreground is out of focus. It was honestly a total mistake." The fully-engrossed record hunters on the cover are Shadow's hip-hop buddies: Tom Shimura (Asia Born), Xavier Mosley (Chief Xcel) and Benji B.

While the project was a career turning point for Cross, it was pivotal for Shadow, too: the album shot into the UK Top 20 and was certified Gold. Says Shadow: "The reason why it's spelled with an 'E-N-D' is because it signified the fourth and final chapter in a series of pieces that I was doing for Mo' Wax with a certain sound, a certain tone, a certain atmosphere."

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ROBERT ALTMAN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY

SNAPSHOT

THE ROLLING STONES

LOS ANGELES, 1969

Mick and Keith have a natter while sharing a Bud in the studio during the *Let It Bleed* sessions at Elektra's Sunset Sound studios in October, 1969, as co-founder and keyboardist Ian Stewart looks on. The majority of the album was recorded at Olympic Studios in London, with further work taking place in LA while the Stones prepared for an impending US tour. Merry Clayton's wonderful backing vocals on *Gimme Shelter* were recorded during these sessions, along with Bobby Keys and Leon Russell's contributions to *Live With Me*. *Let It Bleed* was the second instalment in the Stones' classic run of albums, which began with the previous year's *Beggars Banquet*. To mark its 50-year anniversary, it is now the subject of an expanded deluxe reissue via ABKCO, which features newly remastered stereo and mono versions (see our full review on page 92). ●

SCOTT LEGATO/GETTY

BILLY DUFFY

As The Cult release a triple-disc boxset to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their calling card, *Sonic Temple*, **Dan Biggane** speaks to guitarist Billy Duffy about the LP that changed his life…

The band might not have been a commercial success, but the New York Dolls' 1973 eponymous debut was a pivotal record in my life and crossed over from classic rock to punk. When I was about 13, I'd hang out with kids who were a few years older than me, and they were not like the long-haired pot smokers who were only interested in how Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon* sounded when played backwards.

As a teenager, I wasn't bothered about all those middle-class bands that blithered on about dragons, I wanted excitement and danger. When I heard that dual-guitar attack of Sylvain Sylvain and Johnny Thunders, I was absolutely gripped. Then I saw Whispering Bob sneer down his nose at them on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and immediately knew: if he was going to hate them, I *had* to love them.

I don't remember exactly where I was when I first heard the album, but I can certainly describe what it was like to be a 14-year-old lad growing up in Manchester… it was very grey. I swear that colour photos taken around the city in the late 70s all turned out black and white, but here were the Dolls and they looked glorious and grandiose.

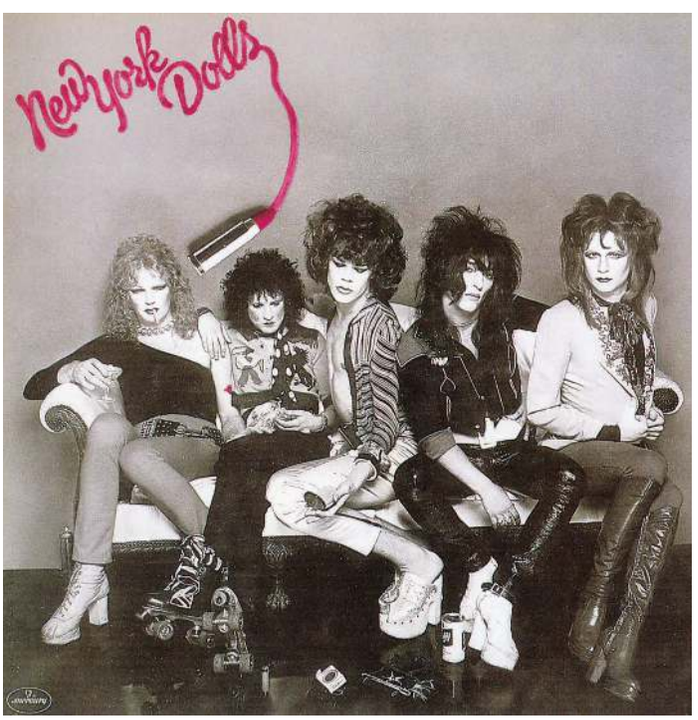
The album is the complete package and I really couldn't isolate a single track as my favourite. But I do worship a great riff and the New York Dolls had plenty of them. I played that record over and over, and I was obsessed, but not quite as obsessive as my friend Steven Morrissey, who was secretary of the UK New York Dolls fan club. I was briefly in a band called The Nosebleeds with Morrissey back then, and it was our mutual love for the Dolls that had brought us together.

When Thunders brought his Heartbreakers to Manchester Uni, with Siouxsie And The Banshees and The Models supporting, I had a real fanboy moment when I stepped into the student union lobby and saw him on a payphone… He saw me loitering, held up a finger and dug deep into his skin-tight Levi 501s pocket before handing me one of his guitar picks. I decided to use the same brand of pick, and now that company makes me ones with my logo on.

I did meet Johnny again in 1989. We were in New York and he was playing a gig at a venue called the Cat Club, so some of us went down for the show. Someone thought it would be a good idea for us to get up and jam, but it was all a bit of a mess. He had a pretty serious opioid addiction by then and was in a right state. He was still a hero to me, but sometimes it's best not to talk to your idols. He died two years later and I can't say I was surprised…

That fanboy feeling never goes away, though. When The Cult were playing in California at the height of our fame during the 80s, Sylvain jumped up on stage to play a song with the support act. I didn't even know he was at the show, or remember the name of the other band now, but he was certainly on *their* guestlist. He always had a flair for fashion, so we talked about clothes after the show… unless you're a complete nerd, it's very rare that musicians talk about music.

When I listen to *New York Dolls* today, I guess I feel a melancholic longing for that time, but I suppose that is only natural when you hit middle age. If it wasn't for this album, I would never have met Steven or written my first song; I wouldn't have moved to London and tried to make it as a guitarist; I wouldn't have joined the band Theatre Of Hate or gone on to meet Ian Astbury… It's an absolute life-changer. ●



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10 Questions For... KELLY JONES

We find the Stereophonics frontman in a reflective mood as he discusses the cathartic experience of recording stripped-back new album, *Kind*. **Felix Rowe** listens in

Kind was put down very quickly. How important was it to capture the moment on this record?

"It was the record that spoke to me really, I didn't try to sit down and make an album. The songs came to me in a very real way. I didn't really want to clutter those songs up with overproduction or over-thinking. Sometimes you can go away for two weeks with the boys, and then I'm tinkering about in a room for about six months, which after a while gets on your fucking nerves! So, it was quite nice to spend 12, 13 days in a room, record it all, then take it back and mix it."

It's quite a reflective set. Was writing a cathartic process?

"That's what a songwriter's job is. *Local Boy In The Photograph*, *Maybe Tomorrow*, *Dakota* – they were all true to the time I was writing them. There's different stuff on there, but a lot of it is very personal. There were two months when they were all coming, so I didn't really question it too much, I just put it down."

You've been around for over 20 years. What's the key to your longevity?

"I think we learnt very quickly that it's all about the catalogue. You can say and do and look however you want, but the only thing that remains really is the songs. All the lifestyle stuff comes and goes."

Is there one track that you can't stand playing live?

"Ha ha, well, we're lucky enough to have a big catalogue, not just one hit from back in 1998 or something. So we can change the setlist around dramatically and still pull out quite a big show. I mean, there's songs you get tired of, but I wouldn't name any of them!"

It's almost 10 years since the death of your drummer Stuart Cable, a subject touched upon on last album's _Before Anyone Knew Our Name_. How do you go about processing that?

"Me and Stuart were best mates, we lived in the same street. I lived in number 54 and he lived in number 62, and I was in a band with Stuart from the age of 12. I've been playing that song every single night on this tour and telling stories about it. It's not an easy one to do, because it can take you to many places in your head. But that's the whole point of art... you put it out there and then it informs, relieves or entertains other people. It's always a strange but rewarding thing when you see people relating to it and singing it back because they've gone through something similar."

How did it feel getting name-checked by Bob Dylan?

"It's incredible! He's the Shakespeare of music, isn't he? My brothers were always playing a lot of Dylan and I loved him from a young age. We've been very fortunate. We did David Bowie's last tour, we were taken on the road by the Stones, U2, the Chili Peppers, The Who, and then Dylan's talking… All the bands that our older brothers were playing as we were growing up, so we got all the nods from all the right people. It's been an amazing, surreal thing... Bob Dylan's sat in his house listening to your songs!"

How important is vinyl as a format to you?

"I love it personally, I still do running orders with Side One and Side Two in my head. I think an album needs a beginning, a middle and an end. I've been chasing the perfect album for 25 years. I always wanted to make a *Hotel California* or a *Back In Black*, *Harvest Moon*; records that are a complete piece of work. My dad had a single on the jukebox in the local pub, because he had a deal with Polydor before I was born. So, the first record I actually saw was my dad's! It's a big thing for me."

What's your most prized vinyl?

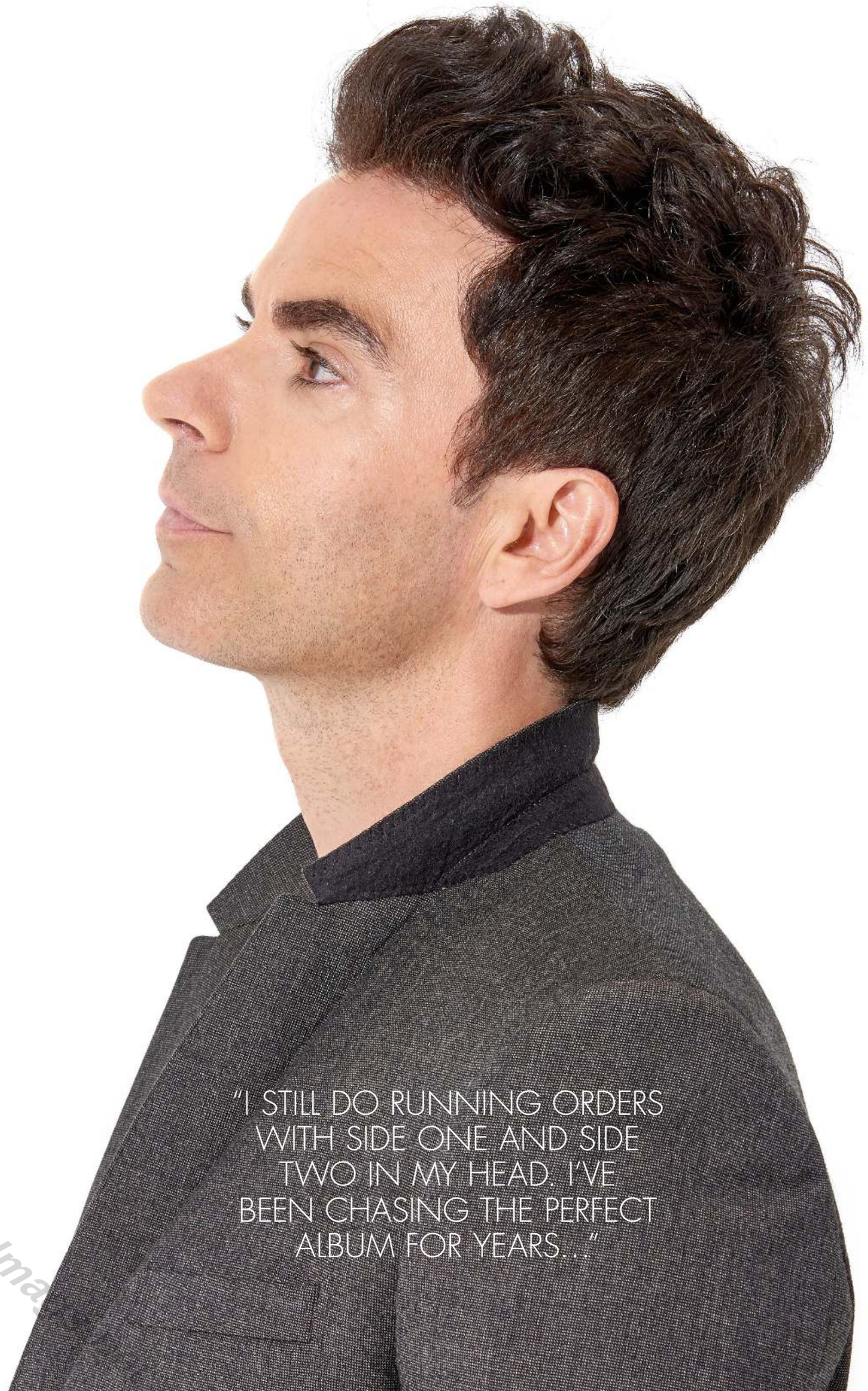
"Well, this song my dad had, *Simple Man*, was written by Graham Nash, and he recorded it with George Martin and Ron Richards, the guy who produced *Ferry 'Cross The Mersey*, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. A guy from Scandinavia read an article about it, and sent us one of these Polydor singles with my dad on the front. I'd never seen a cover of it, I just had the vinyl from the old jukebox, which was scratched and a bit messed up."

Speaking of logos, how important is the artwork, the liner notes...?

"It's all part of the overall experience for me. They go hand in hand, reading the label, who produced what, where the thing was recorded. I've always done quite a lot of liner notes. I used to like the way Pearl Jam did that in the 90s, when it was all handwritten. I've got *Talking Book*, a Stevie Wonder album that's actually got braille on the inside gatefold."

So, what's next?

"I'm currently writing with The Wind And The Wave, they're a band from Austin, Texas – we're doing a record together. I've never written with other people before, so that's a really nice challenge. Hopefully we'll bring it out some time next year. We haven't got a band name yet, but the songs are really cool. It's got a kind of country element to it, with two voices together." ●



SCARLET PAGE

Worldmag

EVERYBODY KNOWS THIS IS NOWHERE

Considering Jeff Lynne didn't play live for 25 years, he can't get enough of life on the road these days. Being on tour has inspired *From Out Of Nowhere*, an album that's arrived remarkably quickly by the standards of Jeff Lynne's ELO. Jeff tells **John Earls** about the importance of keeping it simple, and how to write sad songs when your life is pretty sweet…

The last ELO album, *Alone In The Universe*, was their first in 14 years and only their second since 1986. By rights, Jeff Lynne shouldn't be releasing another album until 2030. *From Out Of Nowhere* is a very appropriate title for a new LP by ELO (or Jeff Lynne's ELO, as they're legally obliged to call themselves). Its 10 songs sound exactly as you'd hope: optimistic, euphoric earworms that you'll now wake up singing at random moments for the rest of your days. The melodies sound brilliantly simple but, as is the way with the best pop music, trying to make such precisely arranged songs sound so effortless can drive their creator mad.

"*From Out Of Nowhere* probably is quite quick for me," acknowledges Lynne, speaking from his home in LA, where he's lived for the past 25 years. "The title song of *From Out Of Nowhere* really did come to me from out of nowhere. The chord sequence came to me immediately, and it was one I'd never played before. So I knew it wasn't an old idea I was repeating. Even the words came quickly. I love writing songs and when you're in the mood, you've got to get on and do it. When I hit on an idea that makes me go, 'Oh wow, I love that chord change! Cor, yeah!', it's one of my favourite things in the world."

Jeff Lynne really does say "Cor!". He's certainly the only stadium-sized megastar *Long Live Vinyl* has spoken to whose favourite swearing is "Flipping heck!" He's fond of a "Blimey". Lynne rarely does interviews, which is a shame as he's one of the nicest, most enthusiastic musicians there is. Talking about his childhood hero Del Shannon, Lynne suddenly goes into a detailed explanation of how *Runaway* was sped up half a semitone by Shannon's manager, a fact the ELO singer only recently learned: "Played at the correct speed, *Runaway* isn't nearly as exciting," explains Lynne. "But Del's manager hadn't told him, so the first time *Runaway* came on the radio, he must have been 'What the…!' Isn't that brilliant?" He's as happy to talk about anyone else's music as his own.

> **I love that emptiness and loneliness in music and I've always tried to get that onto my records**

Lynne is also as wide-eyed and wondrous about the fact he's suddenly begun enjoying playing live again. Before headlining a Radio 2 festival at Hyde Park in 2014, he hadn't played live for 25 years. "I played at Hyde Park and Hammersmith Apollo for Children In Need," he recalls. "I really wanted to do the concerts for them. The Hyde Park concert had a lot of other great musicians on the bill, and I was worried the crowd were only there for them, so maybe by the time we got on there'd hardly be anyone there! The reaction was brilliant, though. That's when I thought people wanted to hear my music again. Ever since Hyde Park, I've felt like people are saying, 'Blimey, this music is great!' about us. Wherever we play, people go barmy for it. For a long time, it didn't feel like that."

Making up for lost time, Lynne has played live regularly ever since. *Time Of Our Life* on the new album details ELO's show at Wembley Stadium in 2017, captured in the film *Wembley Or Bust*. It's rare for a band to celebrate their own career in song, but it soon seemed an obvious idea to Lynne. "Headlining Wembley was a real long shot for me," he admits. "I was really nervous about playing there, because of

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Jeff Lynne played nearly every note of the music on the new album, as well as singing all of the lead and layered harmony vocals

The Vinyl Race

After a series of local bands, Jeff Lynne began his recording career in The Idle Race, who released debut album *The Birthday Party* in 1968 before Lynne made his debut as a producer on their self-titled second album the following year. Original pressings sell for around £150, though both albums were reissued in 2016.

If you want an original copy, you could always try asking Lynne himself. "I've got all my stuff on vinyl," he says. "I've collected everything, all the way back to the beginning, with acetates of The Idle Race. If I love someone, I'll get all their music on vinyl. I love the packaging of vinyl, being able to see all the details, so I've got a pretty good collection of The Beatles, Del Shannon and Roy Orbison."

the sheer bloody size of it. As it was getting closer and closer, I was more and more nervous. But it went great. It looked fantastic up on stage, seeing 60,000 people holding their phones up in *Telephone Line*. I'm so pleased it was filmed, because it captures how it felt to me, that it was an intimate experience you wouldn't associate with Wembley Stadium. When I was mixing the sound for the film, I thought, 'I've got to write a song about all this', because… well, writing a song is the obvious thing for me to do about anything!"

Jeff Lynne's ELO are able to sound better than ever, thanks to improvements in technology since he last toured; he raves about the 200,000-watt PA system he used at Wembley. Lynne is also quick to praise his 13-piece live band's musical director Mike Stevens, commenting: "I show Mike how the songs go and he shows everyone else how they go. That saves me grief, because I can't show a cellist or violinist all of that. We're able to make such a big sound when we play now."

Lynne insists he was too busy working to really miss the live experience when he wasn't touring. "I was getting to work with all my heroes – George Harrison, Roy Orbison, Tom Petty," says Lynne. "I didn't really need to make any of my own music at that time, because I co-wrote songs with most of the people I produced. I wasn't really thinking 'Am I cool or not?' because every day at work was a total pleasure. At school, if I could ever have chosen something to do with my life, it'd have been a miracle to think I could have worked with The Beatles or Roy Orbison. I never stopped thinking, 'Blimey, that's George Harrison!' when I was in the studio with him, because it was unbelievable."

Bryan Adams was the last outside musician Lynne worked with, co-producing his 2015 album *Get Up*. He's in no rush to work with anyone else again, revealing: "I've done enough producing for now. I've done so much of it that I'm not looking to do more. If the right offer came along, I'd look at it, but I'm more interested in getting on with my own music at the moment. There are lots of people I'd love to work with, but I don't want to get myself in trouble by naming anyone." There's a beat, as Lynne chuckles, before adding in the bone-dry Birmingham accent he's maintained since moving to California: "Can you imagine? 'What, Jeff Lynne wants to produce me? Oh! Er…' No, I've got my mind in a different place right now than producing."

It's understandable Lynne is reluctant to try the modern way of dashing off a quick collaboration for someone else in between ELO touring and recording duties. A famed perfectionist, Lynne re-recorded some of ELO's classics for their 40th anniversary on 2012 compilation *Mr Blue Sky*, but he insists he doesn't brood too much on any perceived faults in his music. "I've always thought my songs were pretty good," he laughs. "I wouldn't release them if I didn't think that. But, as you go on, you learn a lot more. You learn from every studio session that you do. I tend to think, 'That's it' once I've done a song. It'd be awful to second-guess my songs, that sounds like hard work."

He's sometimes taken by surprise which songs become fan favourites, explaining: "If I think a song will do really well, it generally does: I thought *Mr Blue Sky* would be a hit. But there are other songs I think won't do so well that get picked up on. I'd never have picked *Wild West Hero* as a single, as I thought it was too slow and people would think it drags a bit for a single, but it did really well. There are a few like that where I think, 'Maybe I don't know what I'm doing!'"

Lynne struggles most with lyrics, admitting, "I need to be chained to a desk to get the words", always writing the music for his songs first and then "wondering what it's about". He was determined on *From Out Of Nowhere*

CARSTEN WINDHORST / FRPAP.COM

***From Out Of Nowhere* is the second album released under the name Jeff Lynne's ELO**

to express a feeling of optimism and hope, with the opening title track and second song *Help Yourself* especially embracing new ideas and staying positive. "I try really hard to keep my music fresh," he ponders. "There's a hope in *From Out Of Nowhere*, on the title song and I hope all the album has an optimism."

It does, but as with all ELO albums there are a few classic heartbreak songs too: *Goin' Out On Me* and *Losing You* are trademark Jeff Lynne tales of loss, despite the music's apparent bounce. It's quite a trick, not least because Lynne has been happily married since 1979, he's sold a gazillion records and lives in near-permanent sunshine in LA. What the heck have you got to be sad about, Jeff? "Yeah, you're right, I've got everything I want, really," he laughs. "I don't know exactly where my sadness comes from, but it's what my favourites used to do. I saw Del Shannon at the Town Hall in Birmingham in 1962 and 1965, and it was his sad songs that got to me most. Him and Roy Orbison would always sing about somebody who's let them down, left them or done something that's just not that good. I love that emptiness and loneliness in music and I've always tried to get that onto my records, because those are the songs I'd have loved as a kid."

It's because of his battles with lyrics that Lynne has resisted writing his autobiography, though he hints that might finally change soon. He says: "Writing a book has always felt like a big, big job. When you're not used to writing a book, the idea of doing my autobiography seems impossible. But, now you've got me thinking about it, it does seem a good idea. Maybe I'll do it next year. The thing is, I'm just not very literate. I can just about get the words together for a song, but I've never tried anything longer. Perhaps I could try writing a nice Brummie novel. Or, if I do my autobiography, it would be a secret one: you'd have to know some secrets before I'd let you get to it."

> **I've always thought my songs were pretty good. I wouldn't release them if I didn't think that**

Mr Blue Sky Tells Us Why

The angriest song on *From Out Of Nowhere* is *Down Came The Rain*. It's a tale of revenge, but Jeff Lynne really does get cross with rain, too. He's been in love with Los Angeles ever since ELO first played there in 1974 and says of the city: "I first fell in love with LA because of the sun and how blue the skies are here. I'm Mr Blue Sky, after all! The blue sky is a really inspiring sight to wake up to, but it's bull to say that it never rains in Southern California. It was bloody awful when the rains came to LA earlier this year. It made all the weeds grow, and of course you then had the fires. Usually, though, I wake up to a lovely, shiny blue. So I haven't thought about coming back to live in England."

If the idea of Jeff Lynne finally revealing his life story is a tantalising prospect, so too are the remaining ambitions he still has to fulfil. When you've produced The Beatles, been in a band with Bob Dylan and taken 50 years to play the biggest show of your career, what on earth is there left to achieve?

"Good question!" says a delighted Lynne. "Blimey… I definitely want to make more music. I'm only getting used to this record, but there were a couple of song ideas I had on the recent tour. But maybe my next music will be a move away from ELO to something totally different. Maybe I'll try an all-out rock & roll album that just wouldn't be right for ELO. Maybe I'll make a classical music record. I don't know, but it'll definitely be more music."

Somewhere under the LA sunshine, Mr Blue Sky is constantly plotting more ideas. There might be a bit of a wait before they're ready, but they're bound to keep those new generations of fans flocking to the arenas all over again. ●

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Learning To Love

If you're a respected band 26 years and 11 albums into your career, you'd be forgiven for coasting by now. Instead, Tindersticks have written a majestic album in a new country, recorded live for the first time and they've even produced their first ever love song. **John Earls** meets singer Stuart Staples to hear how his Greek love affair has been tainted and why his band are suddenly being compared to Westlife

The music of Tindersticks has evolved so much since their self-titled 1993 debut that it shouldn't be a surprise how downright funny singer Stuart Staples is. His lyrics are often bleakly comic, his band's music has long carried a soulful empathy. But witnessing Staples laugh – and frequently – is an unexpected delight. In a pub in Shoreditch near Tindersticks' management offices, Staples is happily bemused at how he's finally managed to write the first love song of his career.

Pinky In The Daylight is a disarmingly simple ballad, which nestles perfectly on the band's 11th album *No Treasure But Hope*. It's even got a key change a boyband could do serious damage with. "I know," laughs Staples, his dark eyes alight with mischief. "Lucy, who leads our string section, said: 'That's a Westlife song!' when that key change developed during rehearsals. It's my first ever pure love song and it's not how I usually write, but it just happened." The song was written in just 10 minutes while Staples and his artist wife Suzanne were on a ferry one sunny afternoon.

"There's something very liberating about writing a song like *Pinky In The Daylight*," he smiles, recovering from a laughing fit at the idea of Tindersticks performing the song on stools and rising up in sync during that key change. "I always try to stay true to the idea of a song, not make it into something I feel should be my sensibility. After writing songs for 30-odd years, I've learned I have to trust those moments."

Writing love songs is far from the only innovation for Tindersticks on *No Treasure But Hope*. The album was written wholly in Crete, at a house 50 yards from the sea, where

RICHARD DUMAS

The Tindersticks line-up has remained the same since 2012's *The Something Rain*

he divides his time "roughly half-and-half" with the home in central France where he, Suzanne and their four children moved in 2003. "I'm slightly apprehensive about making Greece the centre of my world, as it's great to go there to lose yourself from everything else," Staples explains. "I feel different by the sea. If you spend time every day by the sea, it affects how you think about things. Greece is a place to take stock, and these songs definitely come from that." Another laugh, lighter than you'd expect from someone blessed with that lugubrious singing voice. "Don't get me wrong. I'm proud of the songs I wrote for so long in South East London, too."

The sleeve of *No Treasure But Hope* is a die-cut map of part of Greece, indicative both of Staples' love of the region and his dismay at his homeland becoming so insular since the Brexit referendum happened shortly after Tindersticks' previous album *The Waiting Room* in 2016. "I no longer live here," says Staples, indicating the pub's quiet post-lunch atmosphere. "But I've always felt Britain was waiting for me and welcoming. That's something important I've carried inside me, and I feel that's been more than eroded – it's been taken away from me. I've always had a love affair with the Mediterranean Sea, but that's become tainted in some way. My songs are personal, not about nations. But I can't help but have it seep into the songs. The political situation is obviously huge, and I can't push it to one side and pretend, 'Oh, that doesn't really have a part in our songs'."

Staples stayed busy after *The Waiting Room*. He released his third solo album *Arrythmia* and directed his first short film, with *Minute Bodies* premiering at the BFI. Tindersticks needed a break after the lengthy tour for *The Waiting Room* – but that tour also helped them develop into a band capable of anything. "I never thought I'd find synergy in a band again," he admits. "When you're young and your band has it, you don't think about it – your music just explodes. That's very different to older musicians coming together. You can do a great job, but that doesn't necessarily mean you feel together in the essence when you play music. By the end of *The Waiting Room*, these five people had become something I never thought I'd get to again."

"This record is what the five of us have become. The writing was considered, but the sonic decisions were much more spontaneous"

The line-up, stable since 2012's *The Something Rain*, was able to record *No Treasure But Hope* live in just five days. "This record is what the five of us have become," says Staples over his mint tea. "It was important these songs were recorded live. It was, 'Here's some ideas for songs', whereas *The Waiting Room* had been, 'This is where we're going to go'. The writing was considered, but the sonic decisions were much more spontaneous. You go, 'Oh, this sounds great!', then suddenly the album is finished and you go, 'Oh, so this is

RICHARD DUMAS && SUZANNE OSBORNE

what it is!' I'm still trying to understand this album, in some ways."

Staples isn't wrong when he says the actual writing of *No Treasure But Hope* was considered: remarkably for such a gifted lyricist, its 10 songs were the first time the singer wrote his lyrics down. Staples' previous songs, even epics such as solo number *Goodbye To Old Friends*, were composed by singing them in his head. "The words would go around in my head, the arc of a song developing as I changed them," he explains. "I wouldn't sit down and put pen to paper because, on paper, words become something very different. The written word can feel daunting to me, it doesn't feel natural."

The new, more formal, writing method happened "totally naturally", with Staples producing short bursts of lyrics quickly. He cites the sinister *The Amputees* and mordant family epic *The Old Man's Gait* as songs written this way. "I'd write really quickly and see where it took me," he says.

What hasn't changed in Staples' songwriting is that he has to wait for inspiration to strike, rather than try to force songs into life. He's mystified at Nick Cave's famed routine of writing every day in office hours, insisting his songs "need to tap me on the shoulder". Balding, slim and with a bushy handlebar moustache, Staples bears a passing resemblance to Cave. In a checked shirt and with his eyes readily smiling, the singer also looks oddly like James Nesbitt, albeit in one of his more serious roles, possibly a homicide drama. Staples is in good nick for 53.

Cave proved an integral influence on early Tindersticks, giving the teenage Staples hope that he could be a singer despite his doomy, dark voice. Staples grew up in Nottingham, going to a school opposite a colliery. "The view of the colliery was so oppressive," he recalls. "I had some great teachers, but the careers advice was basically, 'What are you going to do in the colliery?' Half the boys in my school went down that colliery, and the only escape was music or football. Now the colliery is gone, I don't know what the careers people would say to me. 'Try a career in marketing', maybe. Music was a place to dream. It still is – you've got to cut away reality to make music. You can't make music unless it's playful."

Worker Turned Artist

Before Tindersticks released their self-titled debut album in 1993, Stuart Staples had worked behind the counter at both Selectadisc in his native Nottingham and at what's now Rough Trade West in London.

"I learned from people who had a greater knowledge than me at Selectadisc, and that gave me a good introduction," Staples recalls. "Then I was so lucky when I moved to London to get a job at Rough Trade, when I was 25. A whole world opened up to me, and it's never stopped affecting me. There'll never be a better record shop for me, because it was part of the opening of music for me. My experience working in record shops is ingrained in me.

"Working in Rough Trade was a place of discovery and when I go there now, it still is. Having a great vintage record shop you can mooch around in is one thing, but Rough Trade's essence is getting new ideas across. That's very special."

Living between a small town in France and a Greek island means record shopping isn't part of Staples' routine anymore. He smiles: "Living where I do, having a couple of hours to spend in a record shop is a rare luxury, and I always cherish it when it happens."

RICHARD DUMAS DAVID LAIDLAW

Wormans.net

Staples' parents listened to Neil Diamond and Perry Como. "Maybe that's where *Pinky In The Daylight* comes from," he smiles – but he feels fortunate to have grown up in the 1980s. "There were so many great singers in the 80s, who showed me you didn't need to be a great singer to get across what you're feeling," he says. "I was surrounded by singers like Ian Curtis, Marc Almond, Kevin Rowland… Nick Cave was really important. Putting on a Nick Cave record could clear the room, as his singing was considered so extreme, even among my circle of friends, who liked alternative music. Nick has learned to do something easier for people to listen to, while doing it very much his own way."

Cave's wracked version of Gene Pitney's *Something's Gotten Hold Of My Heart* from 1986 covers album *Kicking Against The Pricks* was especially inspirational. "You could tell it was a real fucking struggle for Nick to sing that," says Staples. "You could feel the pain within the song, and that really connected with me. There was a collision of desire and struggle, and the struggle is important. If I hear something effortless, I don't know if I trust it. I need to feel that something is just beyond your grasp, not that the singer has just picked something up and gone, 'Here it is'."

That struggle initially proved too much. Staples confesses he didn't feel like a singer on Tindersticks' early albums and that he didn't start to feel worthy of the role until after their fourth album, *Simple Pleasure* in 1999. "I felt so vehemently that I was banging my head on a glass ceiling on that record," he admits. "I couldn't get to the point I wanted to get to. The songs on *Simple Pleasure* really needed to be sung and I felt inadequate. By the time of our next record, *Can Our Love…*, I'd eased up on myself. Being able to sing the title track of that record was a revelation to me."

If Staples is unable to write songs to order, he was at least capable of composing the closing theme to friend Claire Denis' film *High Life*. The song *Willow* was an unlikely collaboration with the film's star, *Twilight* actor Robert Pattinson. "If anyone asks, 'Can you write a song for my film, where this needs to happen in the story?' I could never deliver that," Staples shrugs. "But I've known Claire for years and she'd sent me the script. I told her, 'I might have an idea for the film, do you mind if I go to Robert?'" He'd only met the Hollywood star once, but is full of enthusiasm for how their song worked out. "Robert was completely open to experimentation," says Staples. "He wasn't this super-confident guy going, 'Yeah, I'll sing this,' it was 'Shall we try this? Let's experiment, see where it goes, and we'll record it if we both like it'. We did it together in an afternoon."

The movie experience came as Staples had begun writing the songs for *No Treasure But Hope*, whose influences proved diverse. "The playing on Nina Simone's *Wild Is The Wind* was very important," muses Staples. "There was something in the air about jazz records like that: the palette of sounds, how bass and piano worked together. Hungarian guitarist Gábor Szabó's *Dreams* was played a lot, as was Mac Miller's last album."

Staples is also a big Kendrick Lamar fan. "His records sound great on vinyl," he notes and says it feels "a special time" for rap. "There's a different attitude. The current generation show it's OK to be vulnerable, and as a listener that allows me to connect. That connects me with my boys, too. We can talk about how great Kendrick is together, which I don't get if I play a Cabaret Voltaire record."

"When you're young, your music explodes. That's very different to older musicians coming together"

There's another laugh across the pub table, as one of music's most unlikely comedians and consistently inspiring presences finishes his tea. He doesn't know when the next album will arrive. "You can reach a point of exhaustion if you play too many concerts," he warns, but he's fired up about their possibilities. Whatever happens, it's almost certain to be something to cherish. Maybe there'll be more love songs. Underneath it all, Stuart Staples will have plenty of reasons to keep smiling. ●

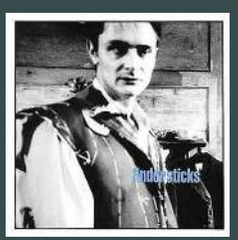
No Treasure But Hope ***is released via City Slang on 15 November***

How To Buy... Tindersticks

THE SOMETHING RAIN
LUCKY DOG, 2012
An ever-shifting number of instruments combine to weave a subtle, sultry and cinematic canvas that touches on jazz, lounge music and melancholic pop. The patiently mesmeric *Come Inside* is one of the band's strongest songs. Pianist David Boulter has named this as his favourite Tindersticks record.
DISCOGS £12

SIMPLE PLEASURE
SIMPLY VINYL, 1999
After three successive double LPs, the nine-track *Simple Pleasure* offers at least a little light and shade. Influenced by soul, there's a more upbeat veneer, from opener *Can We Start Again?* But dig deeper and the familiar themes of heartbreak and sorrow are present in abundance.
DISCOGS £72

THE HUNGRY SAW
BEGGARS BANQUET, 2008
The band return from a seven-year hiatus minus founding member Dickon Hinchliffe, but manage to sound every bit as vital and spellbinding as a three-piece. Vocally and lyrically, Staples sounds rejuvenated following the break. Suzanne Osborne's backing vocals breathe fresh life into the mournful *All The Love*. A supreme comeback. **DISCOGS £23**



TINDERSTICKS
THIS WAY UP, 1995
One of two self-titled mid-90s albums, *Tindersticks* saw the band take confidence from that first release. The follow-up is characterised by intricate and expansive compositions and lengthy instrumental passages punctuating the shadowy web spun by Staples' lyrics, with a 25-piece orchestra bringing a dark grandeur to proceedings. **DISCOGS £24**

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wild rovers

Abandon all your preconceptions. Irish anti-folk heroes Lankum are tearing up the rules of traditional Irish music. **Garth Cartwright** travels to the Emerald Isle to discover why new album *The Livelong Day* is a timeless psych-folk masterpiece in the making

Soft autumn sunshine illuminates Dublin, making the Irish capital appear warm and welcoming. "Dublin's fucked," says Ian Lynch, Lankum's piper, quick to disabuse *Long Live Vinyl* of our illusions. "It's become one of the world's most expensive cities to live. I'm homeless." Registering our look of shock, he adds, "actually, I'm living with my parents 'cos I can't afford to rent."

Cormac Mac Diarmada, the band's fiddle and viola player, nods and says, "I've had to shift out of the city to Sligo." Radie Peat (concertina, harmonium, bayan accordion, piano, harp) observes, "the government needs to stop doffing the cap to big corporations, such as Google, Facebook, Shell, as these companies base themselves here to avoid paying taxes and are full of highly paid executives who force up the price of property. It means anyone who isn't part of the corporate structure is priced out of Dublin." Daragh Lynch, guitar and piano, says, "they tell us how strong the economy is – then why is it so difficult for ordinary people to survive here?"

Hearing Lankum rage against the machine might be a surprise for some who expect Irish folk musicians to play up to stereotypes of lush countryside and pining for the Emerald Isle. Not this quartet. Lankum grew, they note, out of Dublin's DIY punk scene, fusing with its traditional sessions. Across two albums, they have gone from manufacturing their own CDs and playing at squat parties to being one of Rough Trade's signature bands while winning wide international acclaim.

Now, with album number three, *The Livelong Day*, Lankum have created psychedelic folk at its most stunning, an album of epic textures and wild atmospheres.

Indeed, *The Livelong Day* is, for this writer, the best folk-rock album since Fairport Convention's landmark *Liege & Lief* some 50 years ago. And just as Sandy Denny and Richard Thompson's band looked to the past while engaging with their contemporaries' music, so do Lankum.

Taking six traditional Irish songs and two band originals, Lankum create music rooted in tradition, that builds to encompass prog and post-rock soundscapes. From a re-imagining of *The Wild Rover* through *The Young People*'s gentle balladry to *The Pride Of Petravore*'s dissonant minimalism, this is an album that challenges traditions and crosses genres.

> **We embraced the possibility of using the studio as another instrument**

It is a leap forward from their excellent 2017 album *Beneath The Earth And Sky*, and should see Lankum win comparisons with Radiohead, Black Mountain, Björk and other sonic adventurers.

"There was no real massive overarching concept in mind," says Ian, when asked how the band developed such an epic sound. "We just wanted to get bigger, more immersive. Our live engineer Spud is a big part of it, as he worked closely with us on it. We had the luxury of time in a really good recording studio. There was a lot of experimentation and stuff that only became possible in the studio. We embraced the possibility of using the studio as another instrument."

"We've always had the spacey, droney songs," says Daragh. "What we've done here is taken those elements and made a much more layered, textured sound. That's the fun part of it, messing around with the technical side of it."

Radie nods ascent and adds: "Earlier on, we were such purists we wouldn't do overdubs. This time, the possibilities of being in a good studio with a great engineer got slightly addictive. We're still playing acoustic instruments, but we layered them and created these incredibly heavy sounds."

"To me it feels similar to painting," offers Cormac. "You just lose yourself in it. *Cold Old Fire* [Lankum's debut] was a lot more raw, we left in the mistakes. Spud did an amazing job, helping us create massive, immersive dronescapes with these very powerful vocals. He manages to find space where you didn't think there was any more space."

Rough Trade signings Lankum are subjecting Irish folk classics to extreme makeovers

The Dublin four-piece developed out of the city's anarcho-punk scene

Lankum were initially known as Lynched and consisted of just Ian and Daragh. "I'd been living in punk squats in London," explains Ian, "and I used to busk playing tin whistle. When I came back to Dublin, I found Daragh had developed into a good traditional guitarist. I decided to get serious about learning how to play the uilleann pipes, so I joined a class. We were performing as The Lynch Brothers, playing jigs and reels and original songs, and then one day someone referred to us as 'Lynched' and that just stuck. The name was fine for the punk scene. In 2002, we self-released our debut album *Where Did We Go Wrong* and toured France, the US and Mexico, very much part of the international DIY punk scene. Back in Dublin, we were attending traditional music sessions, and that's where we met Radie and Cormac. Initially, we invited them to come and contribute to a track we wanted to record but, once we all played and sang together, it was immediately obvious that everything clicked. They had to join the band."

"Cormac and I both grew up in families that played traditional music, and were at a secondary school that encouraged music," says Radie. "I hadn't been living in Ireland for a couple of years and when I came back someone told me Cormac had a session down the road, and that's where I met the Lynchers. I was just getting back into playing having missed it, playing as much as I could."

"I was playing fiddle and singing," says Cormac. "A good bit of guitar. I met these guys through my sister, we're both into trad, and a lot of the songs we were singing at the sessions became the basis of the band. Our harmonies are not normal in Irish music, so right from the start we were playing folk but going against parts of the tradition." "It was informal," adds Radie. "At sessions, you go and sing songs and play tunes – it's an activity you do – then, when we became a band, we sat down and made choices: 'hey, why don't you do this?' Before that, we just joined in. There was lots of drinking cups of tea." "And lots of sessions in pubs," adds Daragh.

> **It's very difficult to play music properly if you've taken a psychedelic**

While Radie and Cormac grew up with Irish folk music all around them, the Lynch brothers were rockers who came to the music via hearing albums by bands who pushed Irish music forward across the 1960s-80s: The Dubliners, Planxty and The Pogues.

"That was the bridge for me as a teenager," says Ian, "hearing The Dubliners sing songs about button pushers and domestic crisis."

"And Shane MacGowan singing about being a male prostitute," adds Daragh.

"Yeah, that was the same stuff that all the punk bands I was listening to were singing about," continues Ian. "Using your voices to defame people in power. There's a quote by Frank Harte, who was an amazing Dublin song collector and singer, that goes, 'Those in power write the history, those who suffer write the songs'. This is a sentiment that informs our music."

CHANGE OF NAME

In 2015, Lynched self-released the *Cold Old Fire* album. Radie recalls the band discussing how many copies to print. "We were going to do 500 then did 1,000 'cos we were offered a discount. I was worried that we'd have to store them beneath our beds for years to come!" Those worries proved unfounded, with *Cold Old Fire* immediately taking off. Lynched's UK debut was supporting the great Dick Gaughan at Celtic Connections in Glasgow. Their performance won them a UK booking agent. An invitation to appear on *Later With Jools…* followed.

"Mark Cooper [Jools producer] is a huge Incredible String Band fan, and as we sang one of their songs on *Cold Old Fire* he invited us on," says Daragh. "After that, almost every gig on our UK tour sold out. We've had some great luck."

Geoff Travis, the founder of Rough Trade Records, missed Lankum's TV performance, but fell for *Cold Old Fire*. He visited the band in Dublin and signed them, with one proviso: a new name was necessary.

"We never worried about right-wing people coming to our concerts because of the name, because we're from the anarcho-punk scene," explains Ian. "But as we are playing to wider audiences, we didn't want people to make the wrong assumptions. And in today's climate, you don't want to be sitting on the fence."

"Lankum comes from the old ballad *False Lankum*," explains Daragh. "It means villain."

Dublin Folk Old & New

DUBLIN'S LONG BEEN HERALDED AS A PROLIFIC PRODUCER OF FOLK TALENT. HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR MUST-OWN SELECTIONS FROM THE 1960S TO THE PRESENT DAY MADE IN THE IRISH CAPITAL

THE CHIEFTAINS

THE CHIEFTAINS
CLADDAGH RECORDS, 1964

Formed in 1962, The Chieftains pioneered taking Ireland's traditional sounds to the world. Amassing a sizeable back catalogue, they've toured the world countless times, appeared on numerous soundtracks and collaborations (with Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and Willie Nelson to name a few) and been honoured by the Irish and Mexican governments. This 1964 eponymous debut is the place to start.

DISCOGS £12

THE DUBLINERS

A DROP OF THE HARD STUFF
MAJOR MINOR, 1967

The Dubliners (also formed in 1962) pioneered mixing original and traditional songs. Their willingness to sing about difficult political and social situations proved a revelation and the band toured until their 50th anniversary in 2012. Try this fittingly titled raucous 1967 album later re-released as *Seven Drunken Nights* as your way in.

DISCOGS £5

PLANXTY

PLANXTY
POLYDOR, 1973

Planxty (formed in County Kildare in 1972) mixed tradition and Celtic mythology and won a folk-rock audience. Having split and reformed several times, founder members Christy Moore, Andy Irvine, Liam O'Flynn and Donal Lunny all remain active. Get their eponymous debut album.

DISCOGS £10

LISA O'NEILL

HEARD A LONG GONE SONG
RIVER LEA RECORDINGS, 2018

There's a huge sense of energy and excitement surrounding current Dublin folk acts such as Ye Vagabonds, while Lisa O'Neill's *O'Neill's Heard A Long Gone Song* was nominated for four BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. *Long Live Vinyl* witnessed her supreme End Of The Road set this summer. We're big fans of 2013's *Same Cloth Or Not*, too.

DISCOGS £17

DISSONANT FOLK

Touching on old ballads, the opening track on *The Livelong Day* is a radical, 10-minute exploration of *The Wild Rover*. Many have sung this tune: The Dubliners, The Pogues, even Dropkick Murphys, but Lankum's version takes what was an up-tempo celebration of a heavy-drinking man into new territory.

"It was an interesting challenge, as everyone knows that song," says Radie. "We play it in a minor key, when the others are major. And having a female voice sing it means we make it our own."

What, we wonder, were the band listening to that inspired such dissonant folk to pour forth?

"Nico," says Radie. "I play the harmonium and became fascinated with how she used it. And I discovered Robert Wyatt."

"Sunn O)))," exclaims Ian. "Apocalyptic drone metal."

"Scott Walker," says Daragh. "He does things with sound that no one else ever considers. He'll bite down on one word and it just leaps from the speakers. And *Meddle*-era Pink Floyd."

"BEAK>, Geoff Barrow's band," says Cormac. "Also folk stuff. Dave Van Ronk and Kris Drever, the guitarist from Lau, he's a big influence on some of the guitar things I was trying to do. And my brothers' psych-rock band, The Jimmy Cake."

Considering *The Livelong Day* is potent psych-folk, we ask whether the band had partaken of hallucinogenic substances to help them achieve this sonic state. Much laughter ensues. "Can you imagine playing concertina while tripping?" asks Radie. "You'd forget what to play!" "Or think your instrument was melting in your hands!" adds Cormac.

"I'm very interested in the history of mind-altering drugs, so I've done a lot of reading on them," says Daragh. "But it's very difficult to play music properly if you have taken a psychedelic."

Radie, perhaps concerned that we're suggesting Lankum are psychedelic rockers, says, "It's not like we're putting electric guitar solos in trad songs. It's more amplifying certain aspects of it – drone is a big part of Irish trad and many other traditional musics."

"The uilleann pipes are indigenous to Ireland," notes Ian, "so we're ramping up that history and taking it as far as we can. We do try and push the envelope. As to creating heavy drones on acoustic instruments, some Irish trad fans may think we've gone too far."

"We're not trying to reinvent trad music, as we all love playing it," continues Radie. "No one needs to save it or do anything to it, it's a wonderful world where I get so much happiness. I think we're just drawing out certain elements. If they still feel natural then it's good for me."

They do indeed feel natural. *The Livelong Day* is organic in every sense, and more importantly, its magnificent music will surely bring Lankum a vast new audience. Indeed, if successful enough, *The Livelong Day* might even help resolve the band's housing crisis. ●

Worldmags.net

YEAR ZERO

As another decade draws to a close, **Daniel Dylan Wray** speaks to some of the key players from the final year of the 70s, a year that saw the passing of the baton from punk's visceral charge to a whole wave of sonic innovators who would redraw the musical map

IF a single musical year from the 1970s is picked out for special mention it's usually 1977. A landmark often deemed as year zero; the year that punk broke and cracked open a new era that changed music and the ethos behind it forever. The Buzzcocks' *Spiral Scratch* EP kicked off the year and influenced a thousand young bands, Television's *Marquee Moon* became a blueprint for art rock, Iggy Pop released his two best solo albums (*The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*) within months of one another and everyone from David Bowie to Wire released epoch-defining music. But it was also a transitional year, a period when mainstream 1970s rock, from Steely Dan to Pink Floyd to Fleetwood Mac, was still holding far more sway and attention. Arguably, the full reverberations of this landmark year could be felt more comprehensively and eclectically a couple of years down the line.

1979 is as crucial a year in British music as any in history. The potential that punk offered two years prior had now been fully realised by many, as a group of more experimentally leaning artists found themselves hurtling forward at breakneck speed into new sounds and territories. "The transition from 1975 to 1979 felt like 100 years," says Mark Stewart of The Pop Group, a band whose debut album *Y* that year fused the worlds of dub with discordant noise and agitated rhythms. "It was like an industrial revolution had taken place. 1979 was a time of real change – it was like we'd gone from medieval people to highly evolved spacemen. It was crazy, it was like where did all these people come from?"

RO

1979 exists as such a pivotal year because of the multifaceted ecosystem that alternative music made up that year. Seminal post-punk records were released by the likes of Joy Division, The Cure, Gang Of Four, The Slits, The Raincoats, This Heat, Wire, The Fall and so on. But alongside this there was the reawakening of ska and the release of The Specials' debut album; electronic music began to pulse more prominently as the likes of Gary Numan and The Human League reared their heads and Throbbing Gristle released the genre-busting *20 Jazz Funk Greats*. Not to mention that the very same month that Throbbing Gristle sent listeners spinning into the future, punk's last swansong *London Calling* was released.

As 1979 wrapped up, it marked something of a closure period for punk. The groundwork it laid had been picked up on and ran with into sprawling new directions. Countless independent record labels now existed, the guitar-bass-drums-vocals set-up had been twisted, expanded and toyed with, electronics began to come in, industrial sounds started to throb and clatter, and as the beginning of 1980 dawned and Sid Vicious died it felt as though a truly new decade and sound was on the horizon with another one firmly in the past.

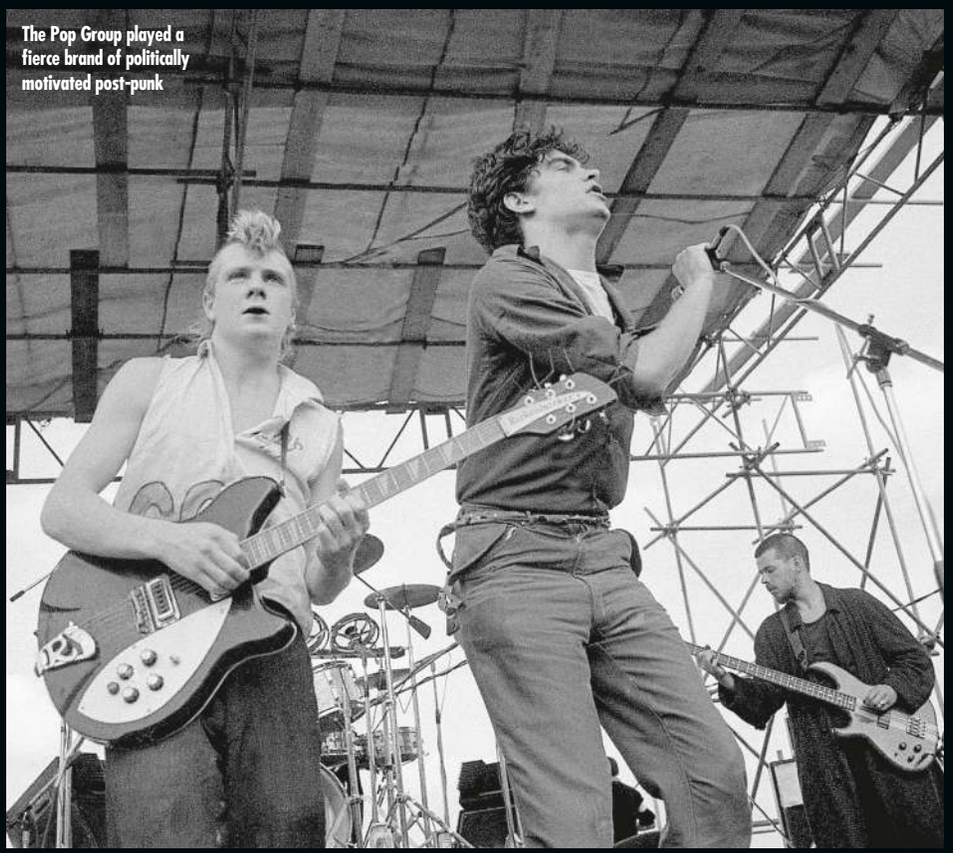
The momentum that had been garnered throughout that year felt palpable says Gang Of Four's Andy Gill. "I rather pompously explained to people in the band that what was being made here was of great cultural significance and would resonate down through the years," he recalls. "They thought I was a complete fool and they ridiculed me." Yet 40 years on, the spiky, restless and groove-riddled essence of *Entertainment*! still resonates today, a sound that has been endlessly emulated but rarely bettered. The key to that period being such an exciting and an important one was its diverse nature, Gill suggests.

"All those records from that period are so different. The things that The Raincoats were doing were so different from what we were doing, for example. What was great about that little period was that there was no house style. There were things bands had in common in the way it was formulated, but what came out was very different. The way I wanted the music was to be very rigid and structured, but also exciting. With Gang Of Four, there's like a great big metronome going all the time and you better be locked into it." Ana Da Silva of The Raincoats echoes this. "It was a very exciting time because all the doors were open and anything could happen. There was a feeling that something was happening. It felt very definite to me and very present. It was very different from anything that had come before."

LIFE'S RICH TAPESTRY

Even someone like Steve Diggle of the Buzzcocks, whose band had laid down the foundations of an independently released punk record, saw that things had really come to fruition by the end of 1979. "There was a hell of a lot of mixture and a lot of changes going on, it was a real rich tapestry of music." The band released their third album, *A Different Kind Of Tension,* in September and it captured some of

"1979 WAS A TIME OF REAL CHANGE. IT WAS LIKE WE'D GONE FROM MEDIEVAL PEOPLE TO HIGHLY EVOLVED SPACEMEN"



The Pop Group played a fierce brand of politically motivated post-punk

the most experimental explorations that the band had ever undertaken. "When *Tension* came out, things got a bit more complicated, musically. We'd been down a lot of avenues by then and were more interested in expanding on the straight down the line punk stuff. There was a feeling of seeing how far we could take stuff – how far we could go. There was always an experimental edge with Buzzcocks, so it was about asking what do we do next? It wasn't so much that punk had moved on, but people had become more aware of its possibilities."

This time also marked a transitional period in music, when artists were less reliant on obvious influences. "I wanted to make something that was like a new language," says Gill. "Something that didn't rely on off-the-shelf drum beats. It never occurred to me to say, 'oh I like this song, let's copy it." This ethos, in which the rock behemoths of even a few years ago played no pivotal role in shaping the output of these groups, combined with technological advances, marked the beginning of a period in which a pure sonic identity was commonplace. "I felt that everyone was quite different and used different instrumentation," says Da Silva. "They found different ways of expressing themselves. There was such a varied group of people and everybody was looking for their own path. That was really important, to go and do your own thing in your own way."

For Stewart, this led to a healthy paradoxical state: a community of bands the length and breadth of the country, all sounding distinctly unique and idiosyncratic yet deeply connected at the core. "There was a camaraderie amongst outsiders during that time," he says.

"I remember playing a show one time and this kid coming up to me and saying, 'listening to your music makes me feel like I'm not the only weirdo in the village'. Throbbing Gristle were crucial for this. Going to their concerts and suddenly seeing all these other weirdos, you'd be open to all these different kinds of people. It was like stepping into a world that you'd read about in Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine when you were a kid. That gives you a feeling of strength that you're not a freak."

As the year wound to a close and more electronic sounds began to appear, for Diggle it felt like a new horizon was coming into focus. "When we were doing *A Different Kind Of*

"WHAT WAS REALLY GREAT ABOUT THAT LITTLE PERIOD WAS THAT THERE WAS NO HOUSE STYLE"

1979 ON VINYL

THROBBING GRISTLE
20 JAZZ FUNK GREATS
An album that harnessed the harsh industrial experimentation of their earlier work into a more refined, complete encapsulation of the band that became a defining record of the decade. DISCOGS £45

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METAL BOX
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THE RAINCOATS
THE RAINCOATS
A delightfully wonky, ramshackle album with both groove and charm in bucket loads. It arguably laid the template for the punk-indie boom of the 90s.
DISCOGS £44

THE HUMAN LEAGUE
REPRODUCTION
The debut album from the Sheffield synth-pop heroes that perfectly combines their more industrial early leanings with their seamless ability for a pop melody.
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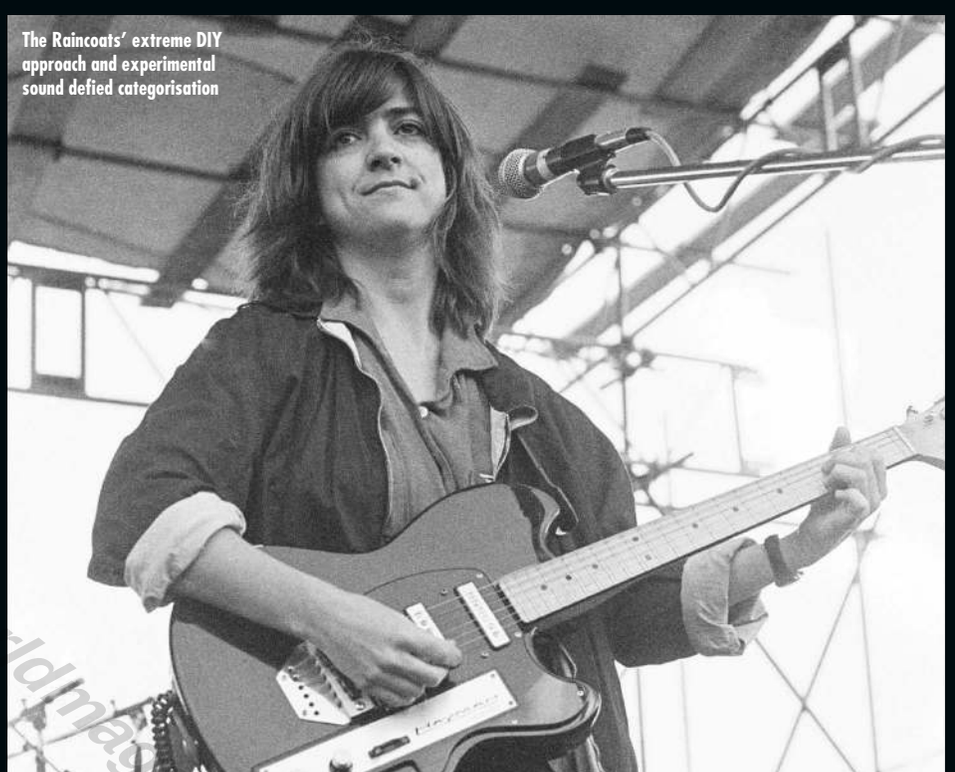
THE FALL
DRAGNET
The second album from Manchester's finest. A wild ride of amphetamine psychosis put to rockabilly beats, itchy guitar and MES' trademark idiosyncratic vocals.
DISCOGS £38

DAVID CORIO/REDFERNS/GETTY

Buzzcocks were always just one pioneering step of the punk crowd

Tension, there was a drum machine in the studio," he remembers. "So there was a feeling of a shift coming into place. Kraftwerk were obviously making an impact and more synths were starting to appear. By the end of the year, there was a real feeling, like a change was going to come." In fact, Diggle suggests that had the Buzzocks not broken up, they themselves might have ended up moving in this direction. "I got used to using a drum machine for demos, and we were getting into that vein. I think we might have gone a bit more down the electronic route if we had stayed together. We went into the studio with cassettes for what would have been the fourth album and we were working with Martin Rushent, who had just been working with The Human League. Pete [Shelley] went off to demo some songs and that ended up becoming his *Homosapien* album, which was very much Pete moving into the electronic era."

Another shift that took place in Britain that year was a political one. Margaret Thatcher came into power and so began a new era of



The Raincoats' extreme DIY approach and experimental sound defied categorisation

DAVID CORIO/REDFERNS/GETTY

CABARET VOLTAIRE
MIX-UP
Debut album from the hugely influential Sheffield outfit who offer up a mesh of hissing tape experimentations and fractured rhythms.
DISCOGS £20

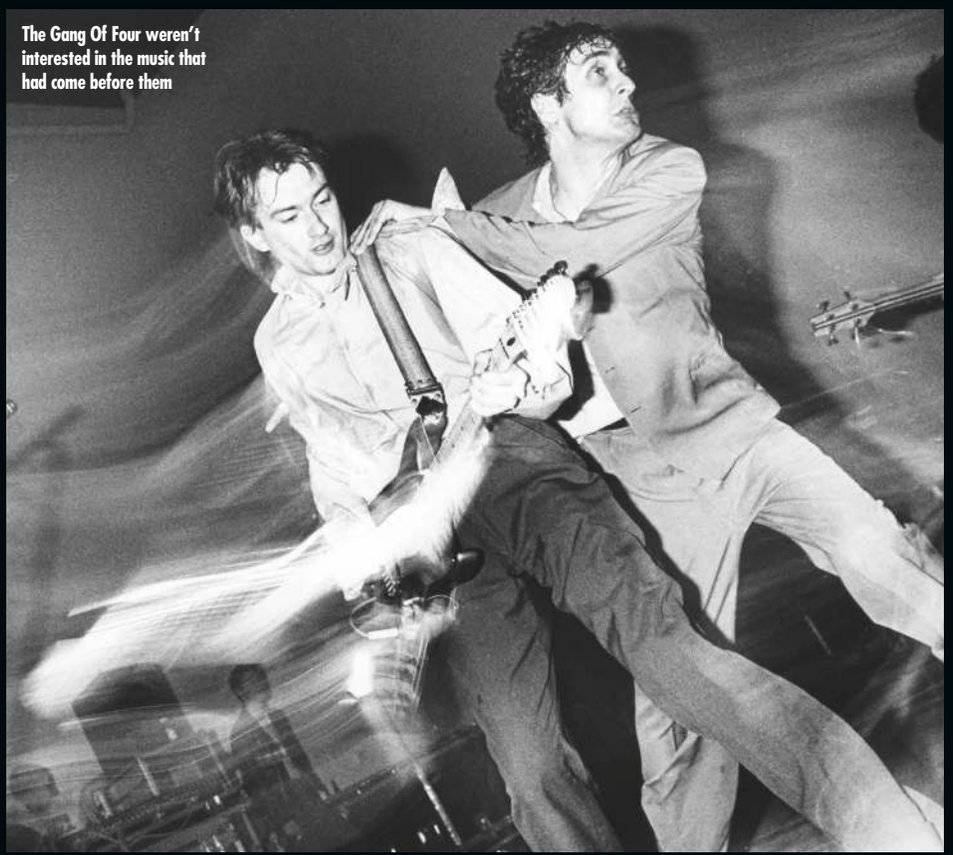
BUZZCOCKS
A DIFFERENT KIND OF TENSION
The band's prolific output meant that they released their singles compilation *Singles Going Steady* before even releasing this, their third album. Less pop-focused but just as brilliant as ever.
DISCOGS £16

WIRE
154
The end of an often perceived trilogy after 1977's *Pink Flag* and 1978's *Chairs Missing*. Few bands manage to achieve in 30 years what Wire managed to do with these in three.
DISCOGS £26

GANG OF FOUR
ENTERTAINMENT!
A set text of the post-punk canon. An album that owes as much to groove and rhythm as it does anti-rhythm, with lyrics as sharp and cutting as the razor wire guitar lines.
DISCOGS £24

GARY NUMAN
THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE
The album that sent Numan into a new realm of chart-busting pop star, funnelling the electronic genius of Kraftwerk into a British pop framework.
DISCOGS £12

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES
JOIN HANDS
The band's second album stripped down the urgent post-punk fire of their debut into a darker, more textural and atmospheric record.
DISCOGS £10



The Gang Of Four weren't interested in the music that had come before them

Conservative rule. Although some of the political music that came that year as a result was not always as direct as some people think. "People often write about *Entertainment*! as being a response to Thatcher, but it wasn't," says Gill. "The political element is more about filtering through how we received that information via TV and the papers. It was about how we get the propaganda. We didn't want to tell people how to think about certain events." Regardless, this sense of outsider camaraderie that Stewart speaks of is one that was no doubt strengthened and emphasised as Thatcher came in and made no secret of her disdain for the sort of people that were making such groundbreaking music. In a political period that became defined by an us versus them attitude, this allowed the brilliant music that was pouring out of Britain to feel like more of a united front.

"Thatcher introduced the era of the greedy right," Stewart says. "To a certain extent, before that you had these patrician Conservatives, but Thatcher and her mates was the beginning of the Conservative oligarchs." Da Silva remembers it having something of a trickling impact. "Things didn't change from one day to the next. Things just went on and on getting worse. Things started getting more professional and money-orientated after that." Da Silva also credits the socio-political backdrop of that era in allowing so much art and unbridled experimentalism to flourish. "Cheap housing was crucial around then," she recalls. "As well as all the squatting that was taking place. It made it a really lively scene and a lot of art came out of that. It later became a lot more difficult to live so cheaply or for free and be surrounded by all this free thinking, art and music."

For Stewart, 1979 was an emblematic year in which the baton of punk had been passed on and then people sprinted off into completely unexpected territories with it. "My philosophy was that punk was a bit like Merseybeat," he says. "Punk was an enabler. It made us want to form a band, but we thought it was about experimenting and challenging everything. Punk blew the doors off and suddenly there was this rainbow of possibilities, you could do anything. It was like landing on another planet." ●

"PUNK WAS AN ENABLER. IT BLEW THE DOORS OFF AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS THIS RAINBOW OF POSSIBILITIES"

THE SLITS
CUT
Another album that celebrated the cross-pollination between dub and punk that also managed to result in something of a benchmark album for diverse genres such as Riot Grrrl. DISCOGS £48

THE POP GROUP
Y
A pinnacle album of experimentation and the result of colliding worlds. Dennis Bovell's dub production and the band's raw, unflinching approach create something truly inimitable. DISCOGS £12

XTC
DRUMS AND WIRES
Three albums in and XTC move into a pop/art-rock framework, utilising production techniques and songwriting styles that would come to define much of the 1980s. DISCOGS £19

JOY DIVISION
UNKNOWN PLEASURES
There's little more that can be said about this album, a landmark release in every sense that became an iconic record sonically and aesthetically. DISCOGS £68

THE CURE
THREE IMAGINARY BOYS
Before the band evolved into goth icons who made deeply textural and haunting records, they were also capable of knocking out pop-kissed post-punk. DISCOGS £12

MAGAZINE
SECONDHAND DAYLIGHT
The second album from Howard Devoto. It may lack the hits of its predecessor, but sonically expands into various new places and textures. DISCOGS £12

GIE KNAEPS/GETTY

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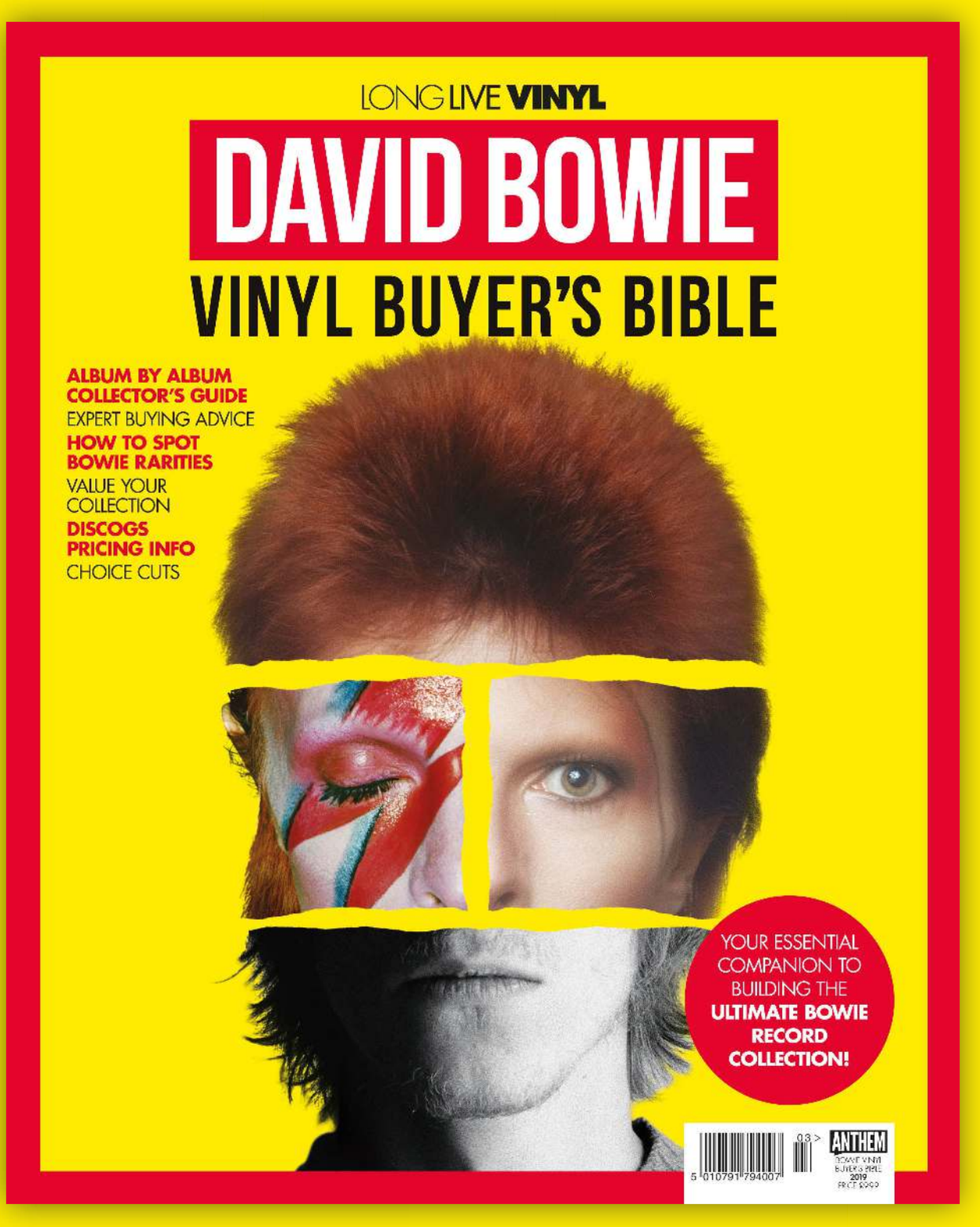

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DEATH OR GLORY

THE LONDON CALLING STORY

Although 'The Last Gang In Town' may not have been quite drinking in the Last Chance Saloon during the spring of 1979, The Clash's backs were against the wall. Entering the studio managerless and broke, the band came out all guns blazing with an album that sent a wake-up call to all the 'faraway towns'. On the 40th anniversary of one of the greatest albums of all time, **Dan Biggane** hears why it continues to resonate so strongly today…

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY

By January 1979, the glorious ball of raging energy that was punk had burnt out. The Sex Pistols had been reduced to a shambolic mess live on stage in San Francisco a year earlier, and while John Lydon had regrouped with the more experimental Public Image Ltd, his sardonic "ever get the feeling you've been cheated?" Pistols sign-off seemed a fitting epitaph for a movement that had promised so much. The only true torchbearers left standing appeared to be Messrs Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Topper Headon. However, The Clash themselves were, as Strummer readily admitted in Don Letts' excellent documentary *The Clash: Westway To The World*, at their lowest ebb. "I think," he said, "that is when we showed our greatest mettle."

The Clash were never going to let themselves be shackled by the stylistic limitations of punk

ALL THE YOUNG PUNKS

Rewind three years and The Clash, alongside the Pistols and The Damned, were heralded as punk pioneers by the rock press when the scene exploded in 1976. Their eponymous debut album, released in the UK on 8 April 1977, had smashed its way to the Top 15 and featured anthemic favourites such as *I'm So Bored With The USA*, *White Riot, London's Burning* and *Career Opportunities,* alongside a cover of *Police & Thieves*. The inclusion of the Junior Murvin reggae number set The Clash apart from their contemporaries and, no doubt already feeling constrained by the phlegm-soaked straight jacket of punk, Strummer knew their rallying cry had to be heard: "It needed to break out and be kinda global."

With eyes on the US, CBS suggested Sandy Pearlman produce the second album. While *Give 'Em Enough Rope* contains some of the band's best-loved tracks – *Safe European Home*, *English Civil War*, *Tommy Gun*, *Guns On The Roof* and *Stay Free* – the LP received criticism from some quarters for its glossy finish. For many, Pearlman had stripped all the volatile vim and barbed nervous energy of *The Clash*.

However, it did claim the No. 2 spot in the UK album chart and helped cement a foothold in the States. Esteemed US rock critic Lester Bangs wrote in *The Village Voice* dated 11 December 1978, that *…Rope* was "more evidence that The Clash are the greatest rock & roll band left standing."

While the first two albums were well received, the band were in financial dire straits. "Economically, we were really tight," Strummer told *Melody Maker*'s Chris Bohn in December 1979. The Clash's relationship with their manager Bernie Rhodes had disintegrated and he was fired. As a result, they lost their Camden HQ at Rehearsal Rehearsals and Simonon's then girlfriend, Caroline Coon, stepped into the Rhodes-shaped hole. A Stateside tour was bankrolled by their US label Epic, and on returning to London the search was on for a new rehearsal space and the little matter of album number three.

BACK IN THE GARAGE

Johnny Green, The Clash's road manager and all-round fixer, discovered Vanilla Rehearsal Studios in Pimlico. From the outside, Vanilla looked inconspicuous to any

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY ROGER RESS/MEYER/GETTY

The Clash were a fearsome live act, with Simonon, Strummer and Jones making a formidable front line

passers-by, a windowless garage that housed a rehearsal space towards the back. Offering seclusion and privacy, Vanilla was the perfect place for the band to escape friends, family and, most importantly, prying ears. In his book *A Riot Of Our Own: Night & Day With The Clash*, Green wrote: "One day, I caught Annie Lennox, then of The Tourists, halfway up the stairs, bending an ear towards the music, and I chucked her out."

Between May and August, The Clash worked tirelessly at Vanilla. Strummer would write most of the lyrics and Jones the music. Strummer told interviewer Mal Peachey: "It just seemed to be like one huge body of work all done in one go… A real intensity of effort, and our only recreation was playing five-a-side football."

Football, funnily enough, proved to be an important catalyst in the band's daily routine. The Clash factored in time every day for a game and whenever members of the record company dropped by to see how things were progressing a match was arranged. "The teams were normally us against them," laughed Jones… "It was quite rough."

At Vanilla, each member of the band drew inspiration from the sounds that had shaped them: Strummer explored his deep-rooted love for all things rock 'n' roll and Simonon tinkered with reggae rhythms, while Headon played around with jazz licks. "Punk was getting narrower and narrower, painting itself into a corner," explained Jones. "We thought we could just do any kind of music."

As productivity levels intensified, the band briefly entertained the idea of producing the album themselves, capturing the immediacy of the moment and not replicating the mistakes levelled at *Give 'Em Enough Rope*. However, CBS were looking for a name and there was only one on The Clash's lips.

EVERYBODY SAY, 'IS HE ALL RIGHT?'

Guy Stevens' reputation had been established for his work with early-70s rock outfits such as Free and Mott The Hoople, and he'd been in the frame to work with The Clash in 1976. Having tracked the maverick producer to a pub in Soho, Strummer returned to Vanilla with instructions to get down on tape what they had been working on. The "Vanilla Tape Incident" would go down as another legendary tale in Clash folklore. Green, charged with the responsibility

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

SOME FAMOUS FRIENDS TELL *LONG LIVE VINYL* WHY *LONDON CALLING* CHANGED EVERYTHING

JAKE BURNS (STIFF LITTLE FINGERS)
"I loved the brashness of punk when it first appeared, but I was disappointed in the apparent nihilism. The Clash gave it a social conscience. *Inflammable Material* owes a lot to the first Clash album. Most bands follow the blueprint of "second album, much like the first", then branch out a little on the third. But they went the whole hog. The title track is a monumental piece of music. From the crashing chords and Joe's wolf howl, you could tell it was a song you'd be listening to for the rest of your life."

HUEY MORGAN (FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS)
"We still talk about The Clash because they wrote about things that remain pertinent. In 1979, Jimmy Carter was screwing everything up and there were a lot of dissatisfied kids tuning into what Joe was saying. That's why *London Calling* broke the band Stateside. Mick and Joe had hit their stride as a songwriting partnership. I put the album on, and listen to all of it. You don't single out one part of the Mona Lisa."

FRANK IERO (MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE)
"It's strange how they are both the gateway into punk rock and the upper echelon you work towards. *London Calling* breaks every rule and somehow creates a blueprint of how we should move forward."

Worldcds.net

TIM WHEELER (ASH)
"The Clash had it all. Great songs, great style and they delivered a great message. I was 18 when I first met Joe Strummer. We were mixing *1977* in the same studio he was using. My English teacher had lent me a copy of that first Clash album and here I was talking with Joe… not only that, he asked me for my autograph because his daughter was an Ash fan! *London Calling* is so crazy-diverse, only The Clash could pull it off."

RAY GANGE (ACTOR)
"I became friends with Joe after talking to him in a pub. I was working in a record shop in Soho and the *Rude Boy* connection came about when I asked a customer what he did. It turned out he was a filmmaker called David Mingay and his company were about to start on a movie about The Clash. I'd moved to California by the time *London Calling* was released, but I'd heard most of the songs live or at rehearsals. It was such a broad spectrum. The intensity of the title track is incredible, a message that remains so relevant."

EMILY CAPELL
"The Clash are my favourite band and the name of my debut album, *Combat Frock*, is a direct reference to *Combat Rock*. They covered so many genres and their lyrics are so important. I'm still learning things from them. *London Calling* proved they could do anything."

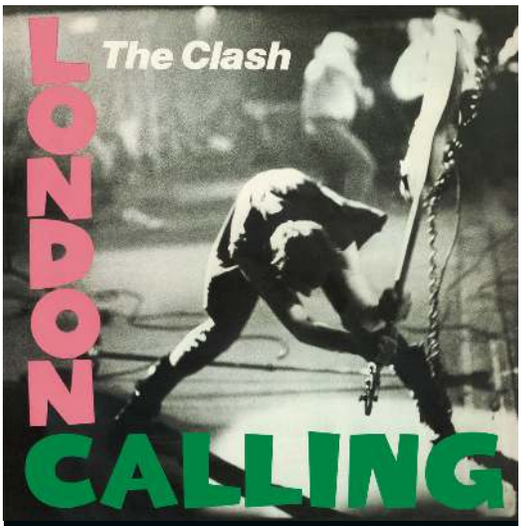
MEZ SANDERS-GREEN (LIFE) "They had longevity and their body of work still resonates. *London Calling* is so daring… a doozie that shows how a band can own their craft and kick on, but not lose everything they stand for."

While the Pistols were nihilistic, The Clash were fiery and idealistic

PENNIE SMITH

of delivering the cassette of the band's latest creations, explained in his book: "That night, we were delighted and had a few beers. On the way home I had a kip on the Victoria Line and ended up in Seven Sisters. It wasn't till I reached home that I realised I had left the tape on the Tube. Unfortunately for bootleggers, The Baker [Clash roadie Garry Baker] had labelled the tape 'Val Doonican'. There was nothing for it but to own up. All I got for my confession was 'wanker' and the band made Guy another tape. He loved it."

A copy of The Vanilla Tapes was discovered by Jones some years later in a forgotten cardboard box and appeared on the 25th anniversary release of *London Calling* alongside the Don Letts film *The Last Testament: The Making of London Calling*. The documentary's grainy footage of Stevens working with The Clash at Wessex Studios provides a valuable insight. No matter how excited The Clash were about their new songs, nothing could compete with Stevens' fervour and his unorthodox approach certainly coaxed



THE RIGHT PROFILE

Befitting a classic album, the *London Calling* cover is equally iconic. The combination of photographer Pennie Smith's dramatic image of Paul Simonon destroying his bass on stage at New York's Palladium and the striking pink and green Ray Lowry lettering, a direct homage to Elvis Presley's self-titled debut, remains a fervent salute to the legacy of rock 'n' roll. Significantly perhaps, while an exuberant Elvis is signalling the birth of rock 'n' roll by holding his guitar aloft, here is The Clash (who had planned to call the album *The Last Testament*), defiantly smashing one down…

Remembering the gig in *Westway To The World*, Simonon said: "There was quite a lot of tension. We're doing the show and we were nearing the end. Nothing was complete and I didn't feel satisfied. Out of frustration, I just pulled the bass up and bashed it around."

Picking up the story, Smith recalled: "I watched him, and his guitar went up instead of down, he didn't do a jump. I started backing off, hence it being out of focus, and just kept shooting."

the very best out of the band. "His world was on fire and he wanted to fan the flames," said Green.

"He'd pick up a ladder and swing that around and then he'd throw six or eight chairs against the back wall," recalled Jones. Talking to *Melody Maker* in December 1979, Strummer said: "He comes in and grabs me by the throat and says, 'I deal with emotions', and that's it. He doesn't deal with knobs or whatever else producers deal with. He's very off the wall, and he understands the spontaneity of the moment."

Operating as a calming yin to Stevens' chaotic yang was sound engineer Bill Price. "Guy used to believe that his job as record producer was to install the maximum emotion in the record," Price reveals in *The Last Testament*. "He used to inject his personality into the musicians, face-to-face, as they were playing."

Given the groundwork put in at Pimlico, The Clash were able to record the album during a five- to six-week period. At Wessex, they were playing purely to impress Stevens. "He was a one-man audience, as rowdy as a

CJ (THE WILDHEARTS)
"The Clash took punk to a place other bands didn't, and in some ways remind me of The Wildhearts. You'd be hard pushed to find anyone from my generation who hasn't been influenced by them. *London Calling* still sounds fresh to me, it could come out now and still be relevant. There are so many great songs on the album, but if I had to pick a favourite, I'd go with *Working For The Clampdown*. It grabbed me by the balls and made me stand to attention."

FRANK TURNER
"The Clash are one of the two original leaders of punk rock. While the Pistols brought more rage and attitude, The Clash introduced politics, wit and intelligence. *London Calling* feels like the record where they found their stride. As a young kid growing up in rural England and bored to death, London really did call to me. The title track captures that perfectly for me."

NADIA JAVED (THE TUTS)
"After seeing Mick Jones on stage with The Libertines at a Love Music Hate Racism show, I immediately rushed out and got *London Calling*. The Clash are still relevant and probably always will be. There's this idea that punk means you play three chords and shout stuff, but this album stands out because of its fusion of genres and beats. *Rudie Can't Fail* is my favourite song on the album, I listen to it on repeat obsessively. We covered *it*, but the original can't be beaten."

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KIRK BRANDON (SPEAR OF DESTINY/ THEATRE OF HATE)
"Seeing The Clash was a watershed in my life. Goodbye stadium lightshows and guitar I could never play, hello reality and angry faces. It was political music in a time of politicised youth. Mick produced Theatre Of Hate's *Westworld* album and he was such an innovator. *London Calling* is pretty diverse, they take a few steps to the left with *Lost In The Supermarket* and *Jimmy Jazz*, but *Guns Of Brixton*, *London Calling* and *Spanish Bombs* bite pretty deep."

BILLY DUFFY (THE CULT/THEATRE OF HATE)
"The second album really resonated with my rock sensibilities, but *London Calling* is such a pivotal album. It broke the mould and allowed bands to be experimental. They looked great and it was a curated image, but not in any way pretentious. The Clash took Theatre Of Hate under their wing when we supported them and I parachuted into that rock 'n' roll world."

ALEX VEALE (TAX THE HEAT)
"Joe is an amazing lyricist who had a strong moral compass. There's a ferocity in their sound, but also a strong melodic backbone. Not only are the songs mind-blowingly good, but the production is timeless. It really is The Clash at the top of their game."

SHIRLEY LEE (SPEARMINT)
"It's the collision of punk, reggae, rock 'n' roll, political anger, pure pop and visual style that made The Clash so explosive... Mick brought so much melody and Joe was just RIGHTEOUS! We still occasionally see Mick on the streets of Shepherd's Bush and I resist the urge to hug him."

The band wrap up warm for the shoot of the *London Calling* video

thousand young punks," wrote Green. "The Clash knew he was only interested in greatness." It proved a greatness unsurpassed.

THIS IS LONDON CALLING...

Always wanting to give fans value for money, The Clash insisted that when *London Calling* was released the double album would retail for the price of a single LP. Unsurprisingly, CBS refused but agreed to include a free 12". This free disc played at 33rpm and was made up of nine tracks. The Clash had got what they wanted, and the record was released on 14 December 1979 in the UK.

Talking to *Trouser Press*' Chris Salewicz, Jones said: "It's our 20 'Greatest Hits'. We knew it was coming out at Christmas time, so we thought we would go up well against all the other 20 Greatest Hits. We think it stands up quite well against Lena Martell." It was a point well made.

While journalist Charles Shaar Murray may have famously described The Clash as the "kind of garage band who should speedily be returned to their garage, preferably with the motor running" in 1976, he was towing the *NME* line three years later. In his review of 15 December 1979, Murray wrote: "*London Calling* is the first of The Clash's albums that is truly equal in stature to their legend. Parts of it sound totally unlike anything they have ever recorded before, yet it is the most quintessentially Clash-like Clash record thus far."

Hitting the US in January 1980, *Rolling Stone* magazine's Tom Carson claimed *London Calling* was "so rich and far-reaching that it leaves you not just exhilarated but exalted and triumphantly alive."

Unfortunately, Garry Bushell writing in *Sounds* (15 December 1979), didn't get the memo… or simply didn't get it. He awarded the album a meagre two stars and complained: "There's no hunger here, no vision or coherence or charisma, no killer punches, no sense of fighting to be heard, nothing that makes you go 'wow'."

The record-buying public disagreed with Bushell and the album entered the UK chart at No. 9. Murray concluded in his review: "*London Calling*: damn right. Now everybody from Birmingham, England to Birmingham, Alabama, call 'em back. This is the one". It was time for The Clash to go global, and *London Calling*'s influence would ultimately span generations.

THE LAST TESTAMENT

How do you follow a double album everyone heralds as a masterpiece? Well, if you are The Clash, you go back into the studio and record a triple. The sprawling, and somewhat divisive *Sandinista!* (1980), strayed further afield, absorbing gospel, folk, dub, calypso, disco and hip hop.

After challenging the listener, the band delivered the more palatable, single LP *Combat Rock* (1982). The group's biggest commercial success, it contained some of The Clash's most popular songs, such as *Know Your*

"PUNK WAS GETTING NARROWER AND PAINTING ITSELF INTO A CORNER. WE THOUGHT WE COULD JUST DO ANY KIND OF MUSIC"

PENNIE SMITH

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

8 ALBUMS THAT WOULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT *LONDON CALLING*

THE LIBERTINES
UP THE BRACKET
ROUGH TRADE, 2002

There is no doubting that working with Guy Stevens helped inform Mick Jones as he turned his hand to producing. Twiddling the knobs on both The Libertines' debut and eponymous follow-up, drummer Gary Powell said: "It was amazing working with Mick. All he actually did as a producer was bring out the best in us." In 2006, the *NME* placed *Up The Bracket* 10th in a list of the greatest British albums ever, two places behind *London Calling*.

DISCOGS £36

U2
WAR
ISLAND RECORDS, 1983

Writing for *Rolling Stone* in 2004, The Edge admitted how the social and political content of The Clash's songs was a huge inspiration. "They were railing against injustice, railing against a system they were just sick of." You can hear *London Calling*'s socio-political commentary echoed on tracks such as *Sunday Bloody Sunday* and *New Year's Day*.

DISCOGS £7

GARBAGE
GARBAGE
MUSHROOM, 1995

Garbage drummer and producer Butch Vig hails *London Calling* as The Clash's masterpiece and dropped a drum loop from *Train In Vain* into Garbage's biggest hit *Stupid Girl*. Given Vig's production skills are evident on Nirvana's *Nevermind*, Sonic Youth's *Dirty* and Smashing Pumpkins' *Siamese Dream*, you could argue that they, too, have all been shaped by *London Calling*.

DISCOGS £50

GREEN DAY
AMERICAN IDIOT
REPRISE, 2004

The influence of The Clash on the wave of US punk bands that flooded the charts post-Nirvana cannot be ignored. Rancid, NOFX, Offspring, Blink 182, the list goes on… but it was Green Day's seventh studio album that channelled *London Calling* and challenged people's perception of punk. Dubbed a punk-rock opera, Green Day "kicked out the rules" to redefine punk for a new generation.

DISCOGS £15

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM
AMERICAN SLANG
SIDEONEDUMMY, 2010

If *The '59 Sound* drew inspiration from The Boss, then their third outing is a direct descendant of The Clash. While Brian Fallon had previously acknowledged his debt to Strummer on *I'da Called You Woody, Joe*, from Gaslight's debut *Sink Or Swim*, it is here that the band captured the *London Calling* spirit.

DISCOGS £12

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
EPIC, 1992

Tom Morrello's life changed after hearing *London Calling*. He said: "I was a heavy metal fan and it was the cover of *London Calling* that first piqued my interest. A week after my first listen to that album, I penned the first political song of my life. The Clash pushed me into making political music and taking a political stand."

DISCOGS £46

PUBLIC ENEMY
IT TAKES A NATION OF MILLIONS TO HOLD US BACK
DEF JAM, 1988

Public Enemy challenged the status quo in a completely original way and *It Takes A Nation Of Millions…* is a politically charged powerhouse that, like *London Calling*, is a musical onion with multiple layers. "They changed everything," says PE mainman Chuck D, "they taught us to fight for what really matters." When Spotify launched the podcast *Stay Free: The Story Of The Clash*, it was only natural that Chuck narrated.

DISCOGS £13

MANIC STREET PREACHERS
EVERYTHING MUST GO
EPIC, 1996

The Clash's influence, both musically and aesthetically, has been a constant throughout the Welsh rockers' career. Just like *London Calling*, The Manics' fourth album signifies rebirth and a change of style. A live cover of *Train In Vain* would later appear on the B-side of *You Stole The Sun From My Heart*.

DISCOGS £45

PETER HOOK (NEW ORDER)
"I wasn't a fan to begin with, I regarded them as a bit too "dressy" for punk. It wasn't until I got their LPs that I changed my mind. I was completely floored. That first record was brilliant, angry and so energetic, it really had a 'fuck you' attitude and I loved them from then on. I liked *London Calling* a lot, it showed a maturity that mirrored my own experiences."

TOM STADE (COMEDIAN)
"I have always been drawn to anything that had the scent of rebelliousness and The Clash reeked of it. They got into my soul and didn't even have to try. I first heard *London Calling* in the late 80s and it was so far removed from the music of the day… It's sad to know there will never be another Clash album, but what Joe left us was the ability to keep the wolves at bay, and for that I will always be grateful."

JESSE DAYTON
"The Clash were more revolutionaries than a band. The political and social lyrics they were singing left me asking so many questions. Not to mention they were the coolest looking band in the history of rock 'n' roll. I saw them in 1983 in San Antonio TX and it changed my life. For the punks they lost by experimenting, they gained the entire world."

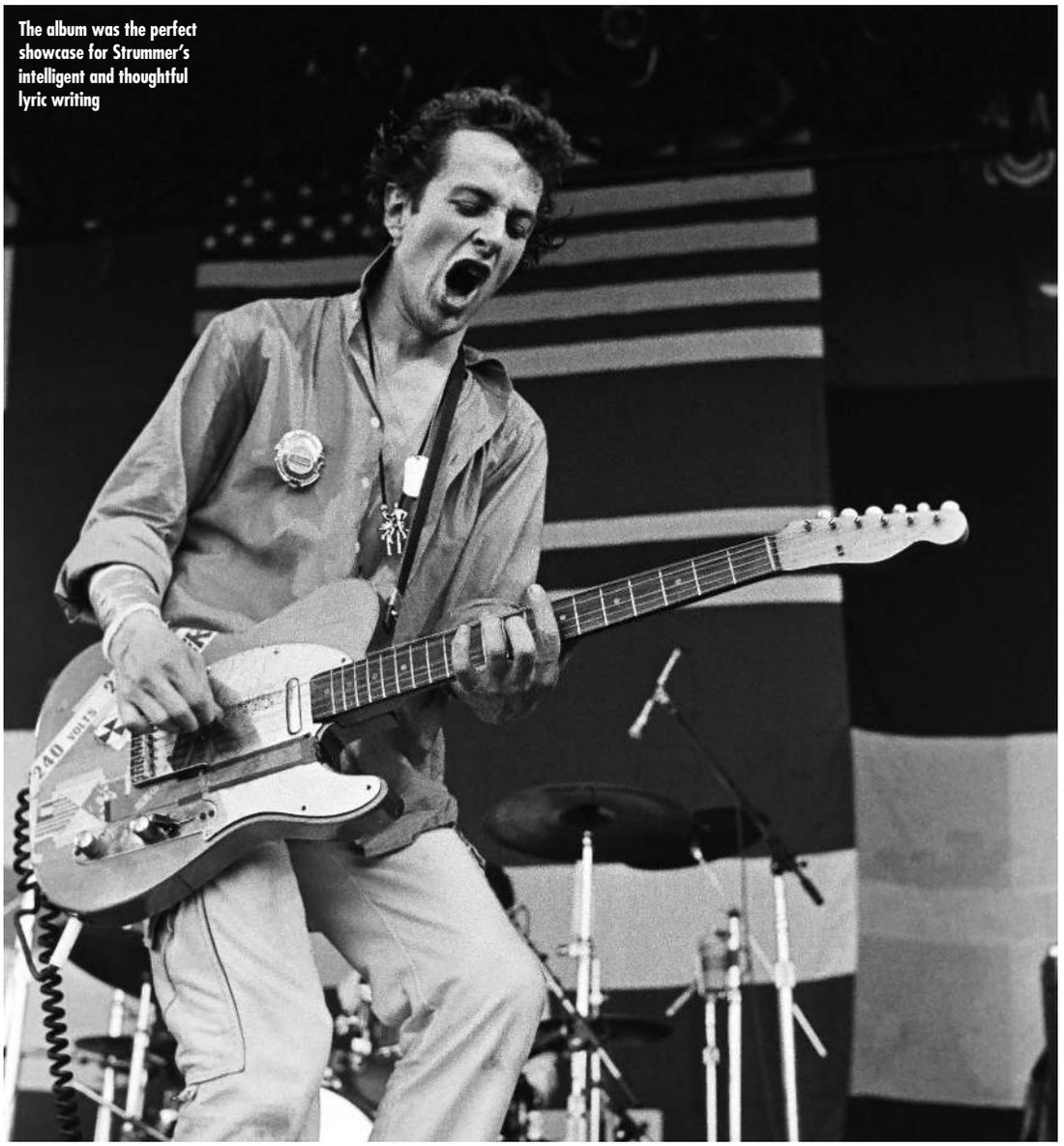
RICKY WARWICK (BLACK STAR RIDERS)
"The Clash made me think about music in a different way. Not only did they look and sound like nobody else, but for the first time in my life the lyrics really mattered. *London Calling* is such a melting pot of styles delivered with the angst only The Clash have. They have a knack of writing memorable hooks, and the song *London Calling* stopped me in my tracks."

RICHARD JOBSON (THE SKIDS)
"The Clash were a huge influence on my life. Their music was the driving force for The Skids when we started out. As a 16-year-old, I travelled all over the UK to see them play live and am very proud to say they all became my friends in different ways. I really miss Joe. The Clash were the first of the original punk bands to move on and become a musical force with a new type of energy in their songs. *London Calling* is even more relevant today when the right-wing factions have taken over the direction of the whole of the UK."

BRUCE FOXTON (THE JAM, FROM THE JAM)
"I think Paul Weller was inspired by pretty much everything that was going on around that time, and I'm sure Joe's lyric-writing would've influenced him. *London Calling* has become more special as the years have gone by. In hindsight, I realise what a great album it is, but at the time we were more interested in what we were doing. *London Calling* and *The Guns Of Brixton* still sound fresh today."

PAUL SMITH (MAXÏMO PARK)
"The Clash's energy and devotion to reinventing early rock 'n' roll is infectious. The influence on their sound from other genres had a big ripple effect and probably contributed to a punk audience that was already widening its musical horizons. The album opens with such a musical call to arms and closes with a brilliant pop song in *Train In Vain*."

ISAAC HIRSCHFELD-WIGHT (ROXY GIRLS)
"The ethos in their music is what stood out when I got into them. They also had a unique style that set them apart from other punk bands."



The album was the perfect showcase for Strummer's intelligent and thoughtful lyric writing

GEORGE ROSE/GETTY

Rights, *Straight To Hell*, *Rock The Casbah* and *Should I Stay Or Should I Go*. It would also spell the end of The Clash we knew and loved. Headon's spiralling drug addiction pushed his bandmates to fire him, while Jones' now fractious relationship with Strummer had reached breaking point and the guitarist left to form Big Audio Dynamite with Don Letts. Strummer and Simonon's "Clash MkII" recorded and toured the disappointing *Cut The Crap* (1985), but by then The Clash's race was run.

A reissue of *Should I Stay Or Should I Go* gave The Clash their only UK No. 1 in 1991 but, despite reconciling their differences, the group never reformed. On 15 November 2002, Strummer and his band The Mescaleros played a benefit show for striking fire fighters at London's Acton Town Hall. Jones, who was in the audience, joined the band on stage for riotous versions of *Bankrobber*, *White Riot* and *London's Burning*. However, Strummer's passing on 22 December 2002 ended any possibility of a full reunion.

In 1989, *Rolling Stone* ranked *London Calling* as the best album of the 1980s and 10 years later, *Q* magazine named it the fourth greatest British album of all time. "Many say that is our finest hour," said Strummer in *Westway To The World*. While Simonon added: "The best point of The Clash was probably *London Calling*. That was the most consistent period."

Ultimately, *London Calling* is the sound of The Clash being themselves. Jones said: "I dunno where the sound came from, but I think it is the reflection of your personality and the culmination of all your experiences to date. You can hear all my life coming out in microcosm and then it's a bigger thing. It is you."

The Museum Of London is celebrating 40 years of* London Calling *with a free to enter exhibition from 15 November. Running until Spring 2020, the showcase features more than 100 items from the band's personal archive, photos and films. The BFI will also host a special screening of* The Clash: Westway To The World *on 14 December. The event features a discussion between Mick Jones, Paul Simonon, Topper Headon and director Don Letts.

FOUR SIDES TO EVERY STORY

THE CLASH'S MAGNUM OPUS TRACK BY TRACK

SIDE ONE

1. LONDON CALLING

The album's opener, which peaked at No. 11 in the UK singles chart on 19 January 1980, fades out with a series of bleeps, created by Mick Jones' guitar pickups, spelling out SOS in Morse Code.

2. BRAND NEW CADILLAC

Vince Taylor's rebel-rousing rockabilly number had initially been used by The Clash as a warm-up song before recording.

3. JIMMY JAZZ

"The Clash take over Tom Waits' favourite bar", wrote Charles Shaar Murray in *NME*. "A lazy, alcoholic shuffle with goose-grease saxophone."

4. HATEFUL

It has been suggested this could be one of Joe Strummer's anti-drug expressions, with the line: "This year I've lost some friends" a reference to Sid Vicious, who died after an overdose in February.

5. RUDIE CAN'T FAIL

The song's title is derived from Desmond Dekker's 1967 number *007 (Shanty Town)*. Letts said: "*Rudie*… sums up that moment when we were turning each other on to our respective cultures."

SIDE TWO

1. SPANISH BOMBS

Strummer's homage to the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War. He developed the idea for the song after hearing a news report on the ETA terror bombings of Costa Brava tourist hotels.

2. THE RIGHT PROFILE

A tribute to the Hollywood actor Montgomery Clift, Johnny Green recalled how Guy Stevens had a copy of Patricia Bosworth's Clift biography and told Joe: "Here's a story of greatness and tragedy. It uplifts you through your tears."

3. LOST IN THE SUPERMARKET

Often considered a Mick track, but actually written by Joe. Jones said: "I always thought he had me in mind and that he was writing about me."

4. CLAMPDOWN

Strummer's intro is hard to decipher: "The kingdom is ransacked/ the jewels all taken back/ and the chopper descends/ they're hidden in the back/ with a message on a half-baked tape/ with the spool going round/ saying I'm back here in this place/ and I could cry/ and there's smoke you could click on."

5. THE GUNS OF BRIXTON

Not considering himself a singer, Paul Simonon said: "The mic was right up against this glass panel of the control room and sitting in front of me, two feet behind the glass, was some American CBS bloke and it really annoyed me. That's probably why the vocals came out the way they did."

SIDE THREE

1. WRONG 'EM BOYO

A cover of The Rulers' song, the story revolves around the murder of Billy Lyons by 'Stag' Lee Shelton. In *Passion Is A Fashion: The Story Of The Clash*, Pat Gilbert suggests The Clash had "a good deal of brass neck to sing about Stagger Lee, but somehow they pull it off... maybe because their passion for black American culture was so strong."

2. DEATH OR GLORY

Nutty producer Guy Stevens' unorthodox studio antics are well-documented. Simonon said: "We played *Death Or Glory* and he just lost it. He ran into the room picking chairs up and smashed them against the wall. We were thinking, 'God, he's gone mad'."

3. KOKA KOLA

Mirroring the relentless depiction of workplace oppression in *Clampdown*, *Koka Kola* is a satirical swipe at big business and consumer culture.

4. THE CARD CHEAT

With its Phil Spector-ish vibes, the band double-tracked everything to achieve that unmistakable 'wall of sound' feel.

SIDE FOUR

1. LOVER'S ROCK

A track inspired by *The Tao Of Love & Sex*, Jolan Chang's best-selling book on the art of lovemaking, which places the emphasis on male restraint and female pleasure.

2. FOUR HORSEMEN

One of the album's more muscular moments, Jones celebrates the rock 'n' roll piano that "makes this tune". Mick Gallagher, from The Blockheads, was drafted in to play organ on the album.

3. I'M NOT DOWN

"Down and down and hit the floor/ down and down and down some more." A defiant Jones stares depression in the face to create a triumphant and uplifting slice of anthemic rock.

4. REVOLUTION ROCK

A Danny Ray original, the track could be a nod towards the 2-Tone sound that had been developing. An instrumental version features heavily in the 1980 film *Rude Boy* starring Ray Gange.

5. TRAIN IN VAIN

Originally intended to be given away on a flexi disc with the *NME*, it appears as an extra track after the deal had fallen through… it's hidden, because the sleeves had already been printed. The song was inspired by Jones' on-off relationship with The Slits' guitarist, Viv Albertine. Read her wonderful autobiography *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys.*

DAN TAYLOR (THE HEAVY)
"Aside from the music, it was the whole aesthetic that influenced me. *London Calling* is such an ambitious record, they embraced so many genres. The cover is so iconic, I'd give a testicle to get my hands on that bass Paul is destroying! I'm such a sucker for *The Guns Of Brixton*, and *Train In Vain* has always been dear to me."

ANDREW LEVY (BRAND NEW HEAVIES) "I was a teenager living in Ealing when *London Calling* was released. It had a raw sound and it was cool to hear London mentioned in a massive hit. I lived in Ladbroke Grove during the late 80s and my girlfriend at the time knew Mick's wife, so he would pop over. It was just before the Heavies formed and he showed me how to programme a drum machine in my tiny bedroom studio."

CHRIS SHARY (ARTIST)
"The Clash totally blew my young mind. Until then, music had been entertainment to me and didn't seem like it could have a message or the power to encourage change. *London Calling* was like scanning an international radio and has an eclectic array of styles and genres."

STACEY DEE (BAD COP/ BAD COP) "The Clash are one of the coolest bands of all time. They spoke about being who you are and how not to be just another blind sheep grazing through life. I identify with that."

PETER "JR" WASILEWSKI (LESS THAN JAKE)
"As soon as you heard that first E minor chord in *London Calling*, you knew that this is something special. Honestly, we are lucky to have been alive in the same lifetime as this was created."

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THE ESSENTIAL

Double Albums

When two sides of vinyl weren't enough for an artist to fully express themselves, the statement double album was rolled out. **Gary Tipp** discovers that sometimes more really is more

Releasing a great double album was much easier before the intrusion of the CD. Back in the day, if a record was over 45 minutes long then it would be cut over four sides, with a glorious gatefold sleeve added for good measure. With the advent of the digital age, the capacity for data on a CD was much greater and overnight the potential length of a single album suddenly doubled.

Muddying the waters, it now meant that CD double albums would more than likely be extended to a triple album on vinyl, which is certainly the case for Smashing Pumpkins' *Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness* and NIN's *The Fragile* – hence their exclusion. Conversely, many long single albums cut onto a CD may well have previously qualified as double vinyl albums.

This, in part, explains why the majority of the albums selected in this Essential were released in the golden age of vinyl, before the interloping CD was introduced. Another reason is that, following the success of Bob Dylan's trailblazing *Blonde On Blonde* in 1966, the double album was regarded as a serious, sprawling statement of artistic intent. As you'll see from the LPs listed, many of the doubles use the four sides to tell a story (*The Wall*, *Quadrophenia*), while others use the platform to showcase a diversity of musical styles (*London Calling*, *Sign 'O' The Times*).

To define terms, we've concentrated solely on double studio albums, so no live doubles and no soundtracks. In the first instance, our price estimates are based on UK first pressings of the album in question. For those who might find the cost of a first issue eye-wateringly prohibitive, we've also listed the most recent pressing.

40 TODD RUNDGREN

SOMETHING/ANYTHING?

BEARSVILLE 1972

For three of *Something/Anything?*'s four sides, Rundgren plays every instrument, only deigning to allow a studio group in on the fourth. The album is the definitive summation of the Runt's songwriting genius, and home to his greatest songs, including the peerless pop of *I Saw The Light* (the greatest song Carole King almost wrote) and *It Wouldn't Have Made Any Difference*.

FIRST PRESS £20

LATEST 2019

MUSIC ON VINYL £25

39 FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

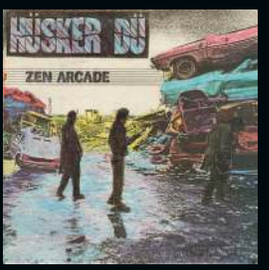
WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE DOME

ZTT 1984

Originally released in October 1984, *Welcome To The Pleasuredome* has producer Trevor Horn's DNA all over it, as he liberally sprinkles all the excess of new studio technology over the project. To his credit, he made relatively basic songs, such as *Relax*, *Two Tribes* and *The Power Of Love*, sound thrilling in a fantastically overblown and bombastic manner.

FIRST PRESS £15

LATEST 2017 BMG £20



38 HÜSKER DÜ

ZEN ARCADE

SST 1984

Alt. rock pioneers Hüsker Dü's second studio release for US punk label SST was a concept album, likened at the time to a 'thrash *Quadrophenia*'. *Zen Arcade* sees the band stay true to their original hardcore origins, but the pop melodies are there bubbling away under the surface of the savage guitar fuzz.

FIRST PRESS £40

LATEST 2015 SST £30

37 DEREK AND THE DOMINOS

LAYLA AND OTHER ASSORTED LOVE SONGS

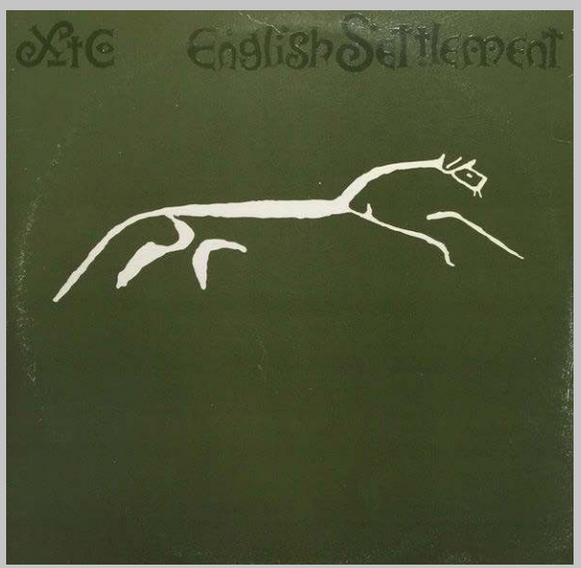
POLYDOR 1970

In an attempt to avoid the spotlight and get on with playing, Eric Clapton became Derek and several sidemen from Delaney & Bonnie his Dominoes. The material they laid down would form *Layla And Other Assorted Songs*. Duane Allman rocked up in the studio to provide the solo for the lovelorn title track.

FIRST PRESS £35

LATEST 2018

POLYDOR £25



36 XTC
ENGLISH SETTLEMENT
VIRGIN 1982
Complete with the Uffington White Horse on the cover, 1982's *English Settlement* saw XTC move away from quick-fire pop and towards an intricate pastoral sound. The change of pace proved to be a good fit, as this assured double testifies.
FIRST PRESS VIRGIN 1982 £25-£30
LATEST 2016 APE HOUSE £20

35 CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY
CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY
CBS 1969
Chicago used their short-lived full name for this 1969 self-titled double, with each side of vinyl possessing three tracks each. The group's sound was as diverse as their multitude of influences, fusing soul, jazz and soulful rock 'n' roll. The band were persuaded by the actual Chicago Transit Authority to shorten down the name.
FIRST PRESS £25
LATEST 2019 RHINO £25

34 MARVIN GAYE
HERE, MY DEAR
MOTOWN 1978
In 1976, Gaye and Anna Gordy, the sister of Motown boss Berry, decided to call a halt to their 12-year marriage. As part of the divorce settlement, the Prince of Soul was ordered to give his ex-wife a share of the advance and royalties for his next recording. The resultant double, perhaps not unsurprisingly, turned out to be one of the bitterest break-up albums committed to vinyl.
FIRST PRESS £20
LATEST 2016 MOTOWN £18

33 BOARDS OF CANADA
MUSIC HAS THE RIGHT TO CHILDREN
WARP 1998
Scottish brothers Michael and Marcus Eoin Sandison created something altogether innovative and eye- and ear-opening with *Music Has The Right To Children*. A woozy and warm double album, its static-ridden beats and melodies were artfully plucked from samples and field recordings. It's one of electronica's landmark achievements.
FIRST PRESS £70
LATEST 2013 WARP £40

32 KATE BUSH
AERIAL
EMI 2005
The follow-up to 1993's *The Red Shoes* was 12 years in the making and is Bush's only studio double. A multi-layered work, *Aerial* is separated into two chapters, *A Sea Of Honey* and *A Sky Of Honey*. The first deals obliquely with her domestic life, making the commonplace beautiful, while the second is a hopelessly romantic 42-minute song cycle.
FIRST PRESS £120 (STICKERED)
LATEST 2018 FISH PEOPLE £40

31 ELTON JOHN
GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD
DJM 1973
The bespectacled piano player went into the studio at Chateau d'Herouville with the intention of recording a single album, but the stockpile of songs was so strong that he came out clutching a much-loved double. Filled to the brim with hits, it's Elton pretty much at the peak of his crowd-pleasing powers.
FIRST PRESS £20/£25
LATEST 2014 MERCURY £20

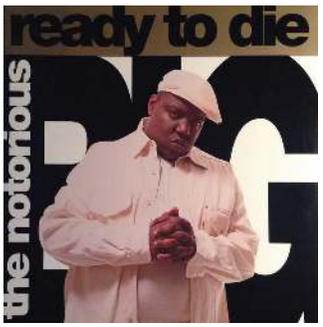
30 TANGERINE DREAM
ZEIT
VIRGIN 1976
Tangerine Dream's third album saw Peter Baumann join Edgar Froese and Christopher Franke to create a double album of dark, ambient space rock. Measured, unrelenting and atmospheric, *Zeit* resembles a work of classical music and, if you allow it, will immerse you in the deep space of its otherworldliness. Picturing a vivid solar eclipse, the laminated sleeve is one of the most iconic in krautrock.
FIRST PRESS £20
LATEST 2011 ESOTERIC £18

worthmags.net

29 ELO
OUT OF THE BLUE
JET 1977

Out Of The Blue's meticulously crafted, progressive pop was wonderfully out of step with the musical zeitgeist in 1977, though 10m copies sold worldwide might suggest otherwise. Paying little heed to the burgeoning punk and disco scenes, over four sides of vinyl Jeff Lynne continued on his personal quest to pick up where The Beatles left off.

FIRST PRESS £45 (CLEAR OR BLUE VINYL)
LATEST 2017 EPIC £25



28 THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
READY TO DIE
BAD BOY 1994

The double album that hurtled the East Coast scene into the gangsta age is one of the greatest rap albums ever recorded. It turned Biggie into a huge star and gave Sean Combs' Bad Boy label a leg up along the way. *Ready To Die* is an era-defining album with funky grooves, cool samples and a mythical allure.

FIRST PRESS 1994 (US) £50
LATEST 2013 BAD BOY £40

27 DONNA SUMMER
BAD GIRLS
CASABLANCA 1979

Lumbered with the nickname 'the First Lady of Love', Donna Summer's 1979 LP is a concept album told from the perspective of a streetwalker. Donna's sensitive vocals and intelligent lyrics provide the drama, while Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte provide the epic production. Disco at its most pioneering.

FIRST PRESS £15
LATEST CASABLANCA 2019 £25

26 JAMES BROWN
THE PAYBACK
POLYDOR 1973

The Godfather of Soul's 1973 double, *The Payback*, was originally intended to be the soundtrack to a Blaxploitation vehicle called *Hell Up In Harlem*. The movie producers didn't take up their option, dismissing the album as the same old James Brown. Their loss was everybody else's gain, as Brown went ahead and released the four sides of sweaty, stripped-down funk to great acclaim.

FIRST PRESS £30
LATEST 2014 POLYDOR £25 (US IMPORT)

25 CAPTAIN BEEFHEART AND THE MAGIC BAND
TROUT MASK REPLICA
STRAIGHT 1969

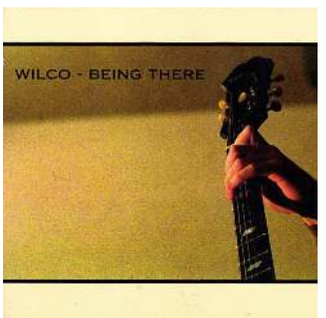
After six months of intensive, brain-washingly coercive rehearsal, the Magic Band laid down all 28 tracks on *Trout Mask Replica* in six hours, with Don Van Vliet adding his vocals later. What resulted is a work of avant-garde genius and one of the weirdest, most singular rock albums in major label history.

FIRST PRESS £120
LATEST 2019 THIRD MAN £30

24 ISAAC HAYES
BLACK MOSES
STAX 1972

Isaac Hayes was one of soul's most innovative arrangers and his 1971 double largely comprises of his monumental makeovers of other people's songs. On the modestly titled *Black Moses*, the Memphis man works his multi-layered magic on Burt Bacharach's *I'll Never Fall In Love Again* and *Close To You*. The much-sampled *Ike's Rap 2* is here, too.

FIRST PRESS £60 (CRUCIFORM SLEEVE)
LATEST 2018 CRAFT £30



23 WILCO
BEING THERE
REPRISE 1996

Hitting the racks in 1996, *Being There* saw Wilco throw off the alt-country shackles and develop into a multi-dimensional rock band. Putting the ghosts of Uncle Tupelo to bed once and for all, Jeff Tweedy and co. leapt forward to deliver their very own *Exile On Main St.* These four sides of vinyl were a sweet, swingin' portent to future greatness.

FIRST PRESS £45
LATEST 2017 REPRISE £50 (DELUXE EDITION)

22 THE CURE
KISS ME, KISS ME, KISS ME
FICTION 1987

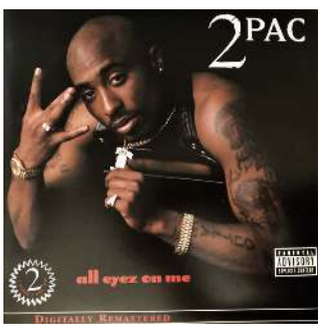
While *Disintegration* remains The Cure's gloomy gothic masterpiece, never has Robert Smith's lipstick been more vivid or his hair more lustrous than on 1987's 18-song double. The band's many facets and moods are all on show, from the glorious pop of *Just Like Heaven* to the tormented wailing of *The Kiss* and many dark, badly-lit avenues between.

FIRST PRESS £50 (BONUS 12")
LATEST 2016 FICTION £25

21 THE WHO
QUADROPHENIA
TRACK 1973

Pete Townshend revisited *Tommy* territory for another stab at that hoary old chestnut, the rock opera. This time, he looked back in mild rancour at the mod scene that The Who had flirted with at the onset of their career. While the stuttering narrative isn't wholly convincing, the album itself remains a strong collection of straight-up Who tracks.

FIRST PRESS £50 (WITH BOOKLET)
LATEST 2015 UMC £30



20 2PAC
ALL EYEZ ON ME
DEATH ROW 1996

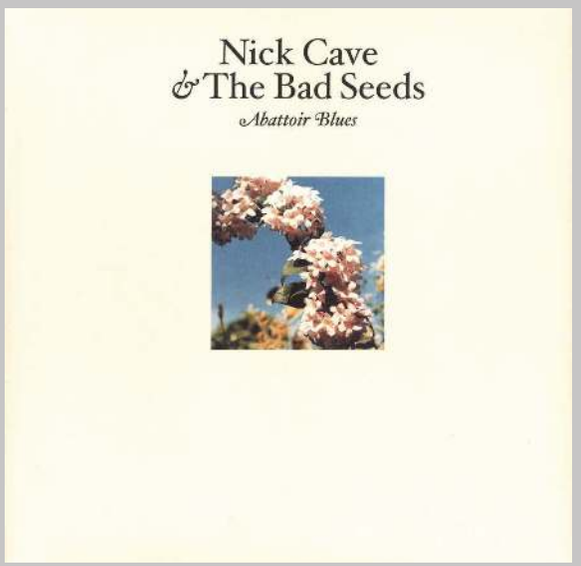
Hip-hop doubles have the tendency to be bloated affairs, yet the four sides of vinyl making up *All Eyez On Me* are totally justified. After a spot of jail time, Tupac Shakur went full-on gangsta and at the same time conquered the mainstream with *California Love* and the title track. *Hit 'Em Up* elevated the East-West rap wars, with Pac its highest-profile victim.

FIRST PRESS £50 (US IMPORT)
LATEST 2017 DEATH ROW £30

19 GENESIS
THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY
CHARISMA 1974

On his final record with the band, Peter Gabriel pushed his Charterhouse chums into one last grandiose gesture, the none-more-prog double concept album. The narrative of New York street hustler Rael is largely impenetrable, but his story inspired some strong songs and Genesis' most enigmatic four sides of music. Brian Eno receives a small credit for 'Enossification'.

FIRST PRESS £110 (SMALL MAD HATTER LABEL)
LATEST 2018 UMC £25



18 NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS
ABATTOIR BLUES/THE LYRE OF ORPHEUS
MUTE 2004

Nick Cave's 13th studio outing was a double album of two halves. First disc *Abattoir Blues* is a snarling, rock 'n' roll frontal assault, while the gentler *The Lyre Of Orpheus* is more reflective in tone. Fire. Brimstone. Humour. Wit. This is Cave at his triumphal, imperious best.

FIRST PRESS £80 (INNER SLEEVES/INSERT)
LATEST 2014 £40

PAUL BERGEN/REDFERNS/GETTY

Worldmags.net

17 MINUTEMEN
DOUBLE NICKELS ON THE DIME
SST 1994

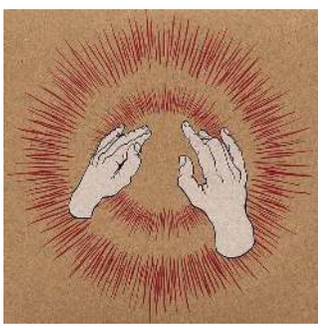
The Minutemen broke away from the confines of the US hardcore scene, and then some, with a 45-track double that gloriously spanned punk, folk, funk, jazz and even spoken word. Despite the epic tracklisting, it retains a consistency of tone throughout and is the band's crowning achievement. 'Double nickels' is trucker slang for driving at 55mph.

FIRST PRESS £60 (US IMPORT)
LATEST 2015 SST £30

16 FLEETWOOD MAC
TUSK
WARNER BROS 1979

A follow-up to *Rumours* was never going to be easy, but the band had credit in the bank. Lindsey Buckingham wasn't shy in cashing that blank cheque and the resultant *Tusk*, a record he dominates, is a monument to late-70s excess. Experimental and eccentric, *Tusk* is the Mac's *White Album*.

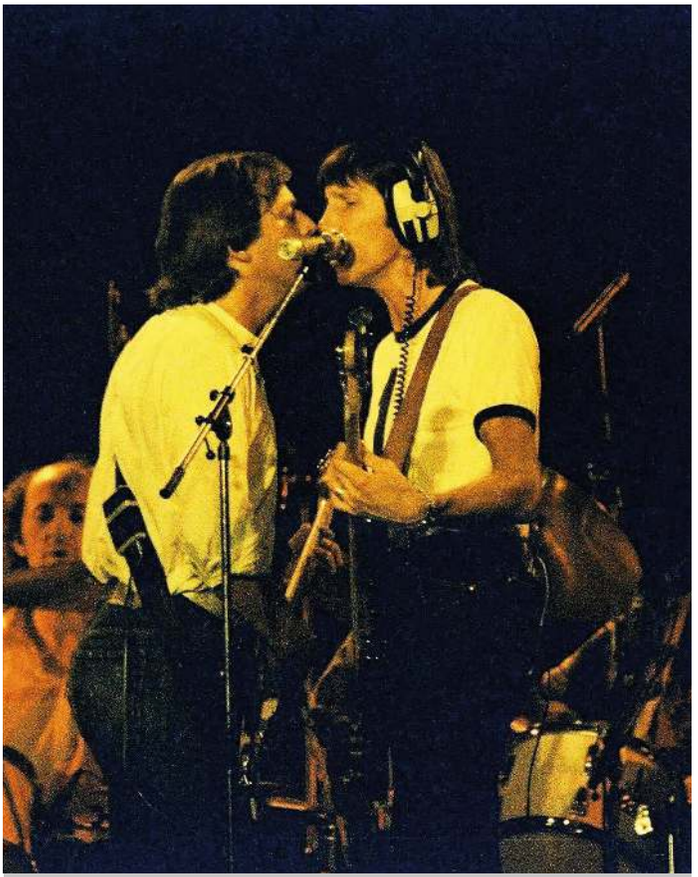
FIRST PRESS £25
LATEST 2012 REPRISE £25



15 GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR
LIFT YR SKINNY FISTS LIKE ANTENNAS TO HEAVEN
KRANKY 2000

The Canadian nine-piece's second album is comprised of four works (*Storm, Static, Sleep, Antennas To Heaven*) with each track filling a side. The post-rock cinemascapes possess a thrilling ebb and flow. A work of aching beauty.

FIRST PRESS 2000 £60
LATEST 2016 KRANKY £25



14 PINK FLOYD
THE WALL
HARVEST 1979

The conceit behind this claustrophobic concept album stems from an incident on the *Animals* tour when Waters, disillusioned by stadium shows, spat at the audience, saying he would only perform again behind a wall. The self-appointed bandleader extended the metaphor to a psychological wall and, despite its phlegmy origins, a much-loved album was born.

FIRST PRESS £90
LATEST 2016 PINK FLOYD RECORDS £30

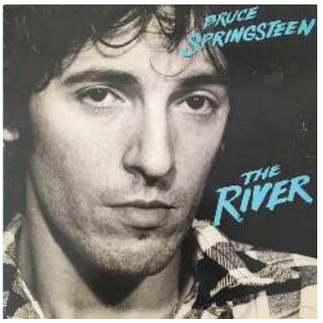
PETE STILL/REDFERNS/GETTY

13 SONIC YOUTH DAYDREAM NATION

BLAST FIRST 1998

The New Yorkers' expressive fucked-up modernism has never sounded better than across the four sides of 1988's *Daydream Nation*. Bang on their game as soon as the needle drops, from the slacker rebellion of opener *Teen Age Riot* through to the 14-minute closer *Trilogy*, Sonic Youth deliver a stone cold indie-noise classic.

FIRST PRESS £70 (SIGNED POSTER)
LATEST 2013 GEFFEN £30



12 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN THE RIVER

CBS 1980

Originally intended to be a single album, Springsteen was caught up in a swell of creativity and added further material to compile a more expansive collection of songs. Clocking in at 83 minutes and spread over 20 tracks, *The River* sees The Boss maturing as a writer as he parks the songs about cars and girls to explore more universal themes.

FIRST PRESS £25/£30
LATEST 2015 COLUMBIA £20

11 OUTKAST SPEAKERBOXXX/ THE LOVE BELOW

ARISTA 2003

One of hip-hop's most audacious album releases, this is in essence two solo albums by Big Boi and Andre 3000 packaged as a double. *Hey Ya!* fuelled its massive crossover, but Big Boi's Southern rap wins overall, even though there's everything from G-funk to pop, electro to rock, seeping across its eclectic grooves. It's a glorious reminder of the only rules being no rules.

FIRST PRESS £35
LATEST 2017 ARISTA £25

10 CAN TAGO MAGO

UNITED ARTISTS 1971

Recorded over several months in Schloss Nörvenich, a castle near Cologne, Can's spellbinding double was the result of extensive jamming – with long-form experimental tracks fusing avant-garde noise with tribal rhythms and improvised jazz. It's the first album to feature Damo Suzuki's inspired squawking, but, ultimately, it is funky drummer Jaki Liebezeit who steals the show.

FIRST PRESS £150-£175 (FLIP-TOP SLEEVE)
LATEST 2016 SPOON £30

9 MILES DAVIS BITCHES BREW

CBS 1970

The pioneering Davis was keen for the rock audience to connect to his work but couldn't bear the prospect of dumbing down his music. The result was the genre-busting, jazz-rock fusion of *Bitches Brew*, an expansive album that stretched its six improvised tracks over four sides of vinyl. Jazz as a genre was never the same again.

FIRST PRESS £50
LATEST 2016 COLUMBIA £30

8 LED ZEPPELIN PHYSICAL GRAFFITI

SWAN SONG 1975

As befitting the band's mid-70s juggernaut status, Led Zeppelin's crazily powerful sixth album is suitably monumental in its ambition and scope. The sonic sculptures carved out for their magnum opus include the mighty *Kashmir* and the funky *Trampled Under Foot*. It was the band's first release on the Swan Song imprint.

FIRST PRESS £70 (DIE CUT SLEEVE)
LATEST 2015 £35

7 PRINCE SIGN 'O' THE TIMES

PAISLEY PARK 1987

Embracing rock, soul, gospel, electro, funk and dance, *Sign 'O' The Times* is Prince's prismatic masterwork. Spread across four flawless sides, it's a swaggeringly bold undertaking that captures the purple one at his prolific, prime mid-80s peak. His last truly great album, this is the sound of a genius at the top of his provocative game.

FIRST PRESS £30/£35
LATEST 2016 PAISLEY PARK £25

6 THE ROLLING STONES EXILE ON MAIN ST.

ROLLING STONES 1972

The tax-dodging Stones decamped to Keith Richards' villa in the south of France with a mobile recording studio and, despite their own best self-destructive efforts, created a four-sided masterwork. In between the predictable bouts of rock 'n' roll excess, the band laid down a wondrous double that just happened to be the perfect distillation of their unique chemistry. Well done them.

FIRST PRESS £150 (POSTCARDS)
LATEST 2016 ROLLING STONE £30

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5 THE CLASH
LONDON CALLING
CBS 1979

The Clash swiftly outgrew the one-chord limitations of punk and their 1979 boundary-less album bursts with ambition, as it serves up elements of rockabilly, pop, roots reggae, R&B, ska and even some punk. The same idealistic political and revolutionary beliefs were still in place, they were just backed by a different set of tunes.

FIRST PRESS £45 (STICKERED)
LATEST 2019 £25

4 THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE
ELECTRIC LADYLAND
TRACK 1968

The time was right for Hendrix to expand his sonic vocabulary, and he did so by adding layers of soul and blues to the existing psychedelic-rock mix. His celebrated third also made more expansive use of the studio. Apparently, Jimi actively disliked the 19 naked girls sleeve artwork as much as WH Smith, who point blank refused to stock it.

FIRST PRESS £150
LATEST 2015 EXPERIENCE HENDRIX £40

3 BOB DYLAN
BLONDE ON BLONDE
CBS 1966

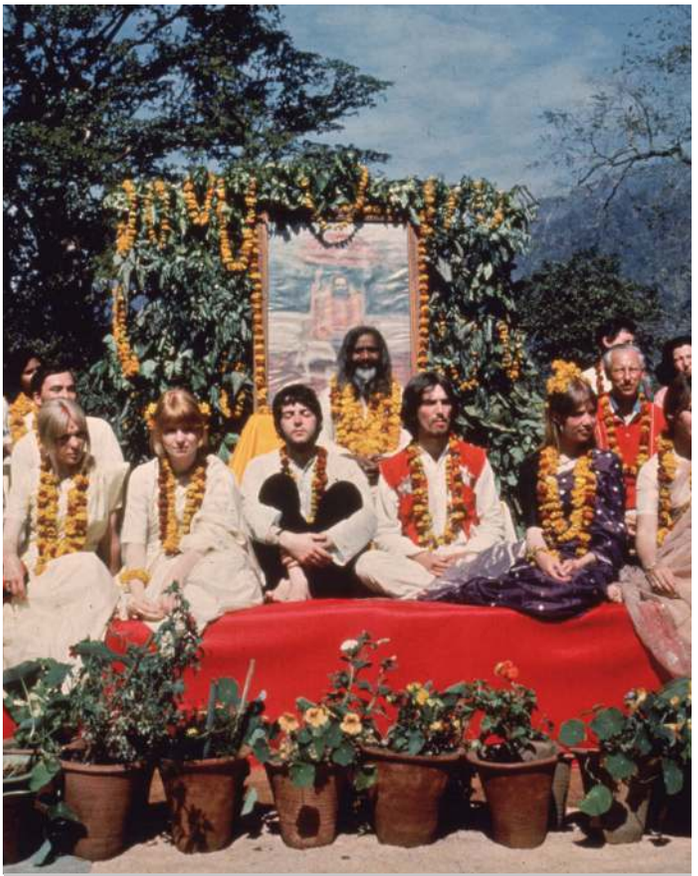
Searching for what he described as that "thin, wild, mercury sound", Dylan recorded his landmark double album in Nashville with a bunch of crack Music Row session musicians. It was a genius move that produced a remarkably rich collection of songs set in a dense country/blues soundscape. It's nothing less than Dylan's certified magnum opus.

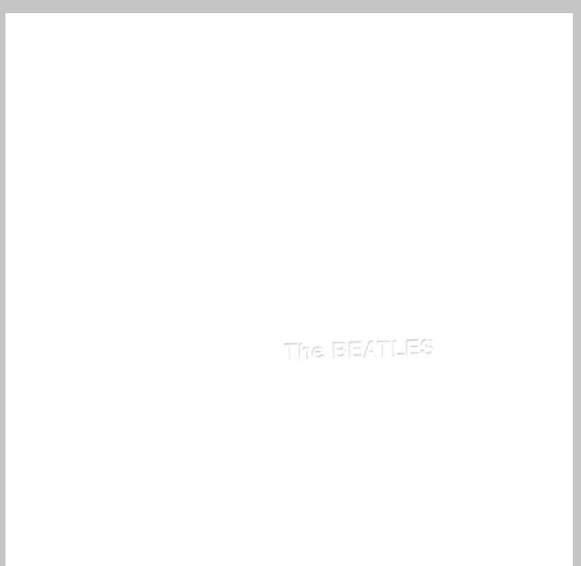
FIRST PRESS £100 (MONO)
LATEST 2015 COLUMBIA £35

2 STEVIE WONDER
SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE
MOTOWN 1976

After wresting away artistic control from his label, Stevie Wonder's output became more sophisticated with each subsequent release. *Songs In The Key Of Life* is the culmination of this momentous period of creativity. This 1976 double is the man at his most inventive and melodic, as he demonstrates complete mastery of any number of styles.

FIRST PRESS £30 (PLUS 7-INCH)
LATEST £20





1 THE BEATLES
THE BEATLES
APPLE 1968

The 'White Album' is a joyously enigmatic 30-song double written largely during the band's Maharishi retreat in India. Its sprawling nature encourages exploration, and for those prepared to dig in there's a hallowed trove of wondrous gems lurking across its four sides. 2018's definitive reissue only adds to its mystique.

FIRST PRESS PRICE DEPENDENT ON NUMBER
LATEST 2018 APPLE £55

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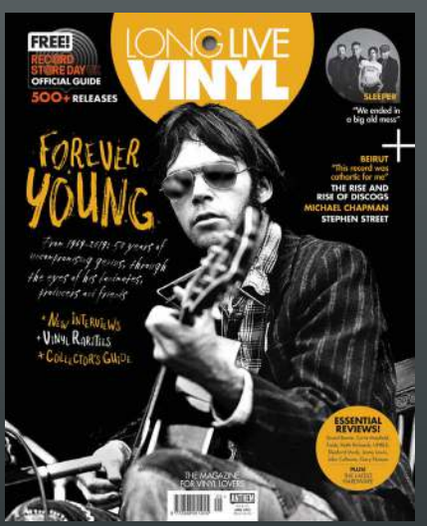

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Classic Album

Gene Clark

NO OTHER

Like other prodigiously talented singer-songwriters before and since, Missouri-born Gene Clark was a fragile character, wholly unsuited to life in the public eye. On what would have been his 75th birthday, as a major reissue of his fourth album *No Other* is released by 4AD, Neil Crossley looks back at Clark's under-appreciated masterpiece

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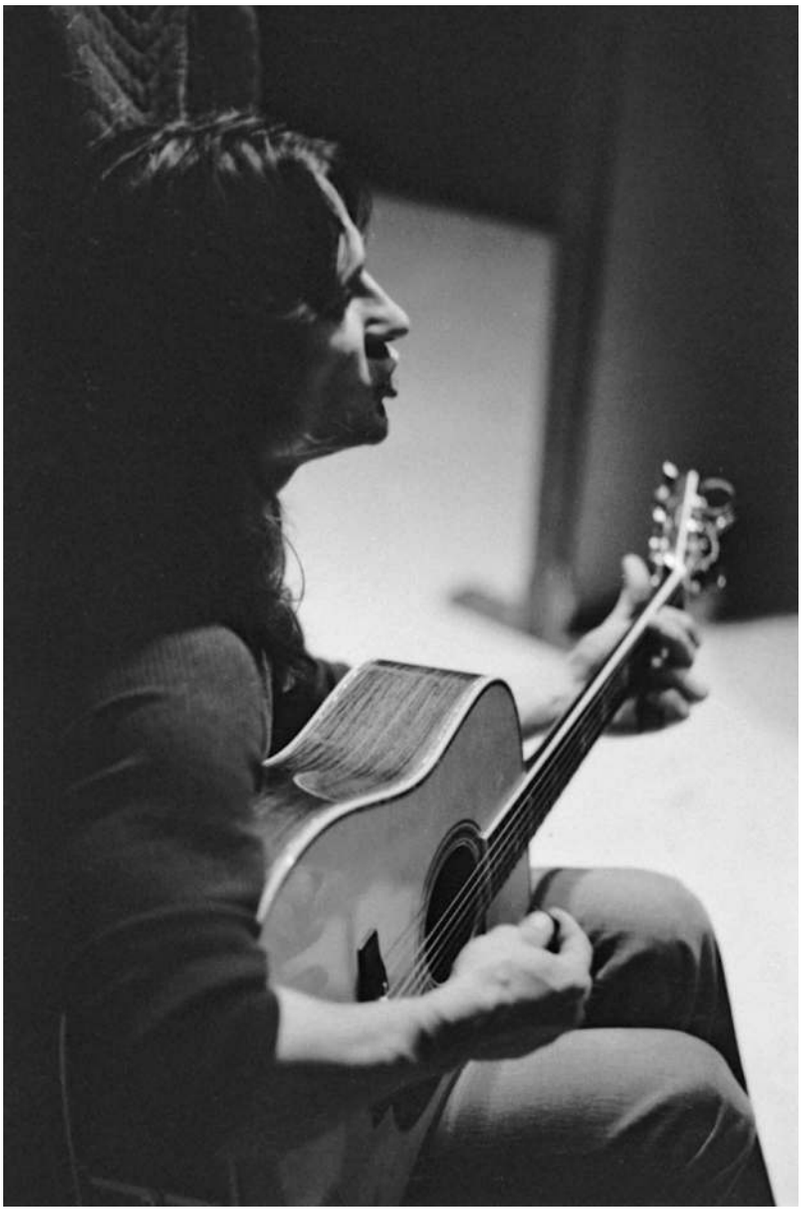

Original Byrd and singer-songwriting legend Clark crafted highly poetic folk and country-rock

Few words imply a sense of commercial and critical failure in the music industry quite as effectively as the phrase 'lost classic'. Over the decades, numerous such albums have failed to pique the interest of record buyers or critics on their release, either through simple lack of promotion or the records being too far ahead of the curve for listeners to grasp their greatness.

Titles such as *Safe At Home* (1968) by International Submarine Band, *Parallelograms* (1970) by Linda Perhacs, *Dixie Fried* (1972) by James Luther Dickinson and *California* (1988) by American Music Club. Another record that fits seamlessly into this category is *No Other*, the fourth solo album by revered singer-songwriter and founder member of The Byrds, Gene Clark.

Released in 1974, *No Other* received no promotion from Asylum, the label that had funded it to the tune of $100,000. It was roundly ignored by the public and critics alike, rejected by most as an exercise in bloated studio excess. The album peaked briefly at No. 144 in the Billboard charts, before plummeting into obscurity. For Clark, who had invested so much of himself in the album, the response was devastating.

Four and half decades on and *No Other* is viewed in a wholly different light. This month, to mark what would have been the 75th birthday of the late Gene Clark, 4AD have unveiled a lush and expansive reissue, remastered at Abbey Road Studios. The release reflects burgeoning interest in Clark and the album that is widely regarded as his masterpiece.

THE REAL THING

Sadly, it took the death of Gene Clark in May 1991 to prompt renewed interest. The album's reappraisal began with its first reissue, on CD, later that year. In the early 2000s, *No Other* was reissued a second time to positive critical acclaim.

For many, Gene Clark is inextricably linked to the folk-rock and country-rock of late-60s and early-70s LA. But unlike most of his more urbane contemporaries on the LA scene, he was the real thing – a musician from America's rural heartland who was immersed in folk and country music traditions from his childhood.

Harold Eugene 'Gene' Clark was born in Tipton, Missouri on 17 November 1944, the third of 13 children in a family of Irish, German and American Indian heritage. The family moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where as a boy he began learning to play the guitar and harmonica from his father. By the age of 11, he was writing his own songs, going on to develop a rich tenor voice and playing with regional folk bands after graduating from high school. In 1963, his talents were spotted by renowned folk ensemble the New Christy Minstrels, who hired him.

Clark recorded two albums with the band, but left in early 1964, after being transfixed by a song he heard on a jukebox. The song was *She Loves You* by The Beatles and Clark was reportedly so entranced by the record that he played it 50 consecutive times. He promptly left the New Christy Minstrels and moved to Los Angeles, where he met fellow folkie and Beatles convert Roger McGuinn at the Troubadour Club. Together, they began assembling a band that would become The Byrds.

TROUBLED SOUL

Along with new recruit David Crosby, Clark and McGuinn forged a fearsome trio of songwriters. They co-wrote the band's first self-penned hit, *Eight Miles High*. But while McGuinn and Crosby went on to achieve the greatest level of fame, Clark was arguably the one with the most talent, writing or co-writing many of their best-known songs, such as *Set You Free This Time* and *I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better*.

"At one time, he was the power in The Byrds, not McGuinn, not Crosby," The Byrds' bassist Chris Hillman told Johnny Rogan in his 2008 book *The Byrds: Timeless Flight Revisited, The Sequel*. "It was Gene who would burst through the stage curtain banging on a tambourine, coming on like a young Prince Valiant. A hero, our saviour. Few in the audience could take their eyes off this presence. He *was* the songwriter. He had the 'gift' that none of the rest of us had developed yet. So many great songs."

As principal songwriter, Clark received the lion's share of royalties, and soon the cheques started pouring in. But his new-found wealth provoked envy and indignation among his bandmates, particularly when he began breezing around town in a brand new Ferrari.

The Byrds became a hot bed of feuds and resentments, with Crosby and McGuinn allegedly preying on Clark's insecurities. For all his creative talent, Clark was already

JOHN DIETRICH - FROM THE COLLECTION OF WHIN OFFICE

a deeply troubled soul. Outwardly, he was strong and confident but he was highly strung and sensitive, plagued by inner demons and neuroses. While he had talent in abundance, he was wholly unsuited to life on the road. His problems were compounded by a profound fear of flying, which stemmed from witnessing a fatal air crash as a child.

Clark became increasingly isolated within the band. Matters came to a head in February 1966, when he had a panic attack after The Byrds boarded a plane to New York. As the plane taxied on the runway, the terrified Clark demanded to be let off the flight. At the moment he left the plane, he also left the band, with McGuinn famously informing him "If you can't fly, you can't be a Byrd".

GOING SOLO

Clark set about carving out a solo career and within months he had signed a solo deal with Columbia. In 1967, he released his first solo album *Gene Clark With The Gosdin Brothers*. The album's confident mix of pop, country rock and baroque psychedelic tracks received favourable reviews, although it failed commercially.

Shaken by this setback, he briefly rejoined The Byrds, replacing the sacked Crosby, but left after just three weeks. In 1968, he embarked on a far more fruitful collaboration, with bluegrass banjo player and fellow Missouri native, Doug Dillard. As Dillard & Clark, they signed with A&M and produced two albums *The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard & Clark* (1968) and *Through The Morning, Through The Night* (1969). These were seminal works. The first record was a stunning album of acoustic country rock, while the more traditionally bluegrass second album boasted compositions such as *Polly*, a gloriously stark and haunting song, rich with longing.

Clark and Dillard were an impressive creative union. But they also shared a passion for booze and drugs. One of their favourite pastimes was dropping acid and downing Martinis at Dan Tana's, the restaurant next door to the Troubadour club on Sunset Strip.

In his book *Hotel California: Singer-Songwriters And Cocaine Cowboys In The LA Canyons, 1967-1976*, Barney Hoskyns recalls how Dillard and Clark got steaming drunk in Dan Tana's in the hours before making their live debut at The Troubadour. "There, the two men sat, olives bobbing in their Martinis, stoned out of their skulls," he wrote.

The pair were eventually tracked down and escorted back to the Troubadour. "When the lights came up on the band, Dillard stood stage central with his banjo and shitkicker grin… at the rear of the stage was Harold Eugene Clark, sitting on his amp and facing the back wall."

Things went pretty much downhill from there. While Dillard & Clark did manage to turn in some decent live performances, Clark was unhappy with the traditional bluegrass sound the band had pursued. He left in 1969 and went into semi-retirement, buying a house in Mendocino, California, where he lived with his new wife Carrie and their two young sons.

"He was the songwriter. He had the 'gift' that none of the rest of us had developed yet. So many great songs"
CHRIS HILLMAN

The songs

CORE PERSONNEL

Gene Clark Guitar, vocals
Chris Hillman Mandolin
Jesse Ed Davis Guitar
Stephen Bruton Guitar
Bill Cuomo Organ
Craig Doerge Keyboards
Howard "Buzz" Feiten Guitar
Danny Kortchmar Guitar
Russ Kunkel Drums
Joe Lala Percussion
Ted Machell Cello
Jerry McGee Guitar
Leland Sklar Bass
Butch Trucks Drums
Michael Utley Keyboards
Richard Greene, Beryl Marriott Violin
Uncredited Pedal steel guitar on *The True One*
Sherlie Matthews, Cindy Bullens, Ronnie Barron, Clydie King, Claudia Lennear, Venetta Fields, Timothy B. Schmit, Carlena Williams Background vocals

MAIN PRODUCTION CREDITS

Thomas Jefferson Kaye

RECORDED

Spring 1974, The Village Recorder, West Los Angeles, California

RELEASED

September 1974, Asylum

1 Life's Greatest Fool

From the first few bars of this upbeat country-gospel anthem, Thomas Jefferson Kaye's production comes to the fore, unveiling a vast, grandiose sound. It may have seemed overwrought at the time but within 18 months of its release, Fleetwood Mac would be utilising similar performance and production techniques to kickstart their platinum-selling career trajectory. There's a real skip to this opener, with a lush, understated feel initially that counteracts the sweeping scale of the production. Piano trills provide a carefree feel and anchoring it all is a strong bassline from Leland Sklar, who weaves between fluid walking lines and an outright driving shuffle. The lyrics are obtuse and unconvincing at times – 'Do you believe when you're all alone/ You held the key to your destiny gone' – but Clark's delivery gives them resonance and conviction. The full-on call-and-response gospel-style backing vocals that enter the mix at 1:18 take the track to real heights.

2 Silver Raven

In the throes of assessing Gene Clark's fearsome back catalogue, critics occasionally overlook the greatness of his vocals. Clark had a superb voice, one which, as *The Guardian* put it in a 2016 retrospective of his work, "merits consideration alongside Scott Walker and

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The songs
CONTINUED

Nina Simone". Here, his rich, warm timbre lends itself effortlessly to the yearning emotion on this country-tinged masterpiece. The chord sequence could not be more basic: Em–C with just two fleeting instances of B7 along the way, all of which evokes a spacious, brooding emptiness. In an interview in 1976, Clark explained that the song was influenced by a news story about a satellite. "They said they couldn't figure out where it came from. It was beyond our solar system. They were getting signals from it that they said were about 100 years ahead of our technology." Clark collaborator Jesse Ed Davis and LA session whizz Danny Kortchmar provide some searing guitar work.

3 No Other

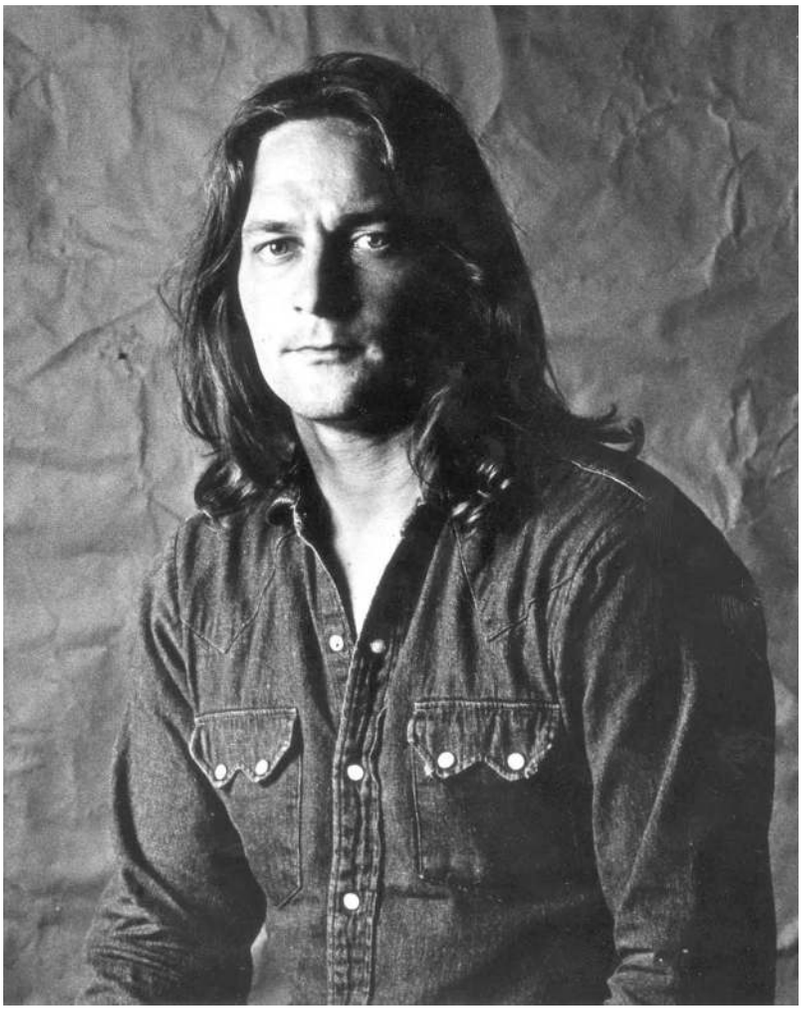
This is the point at which the album veers headlong towards a multi-genre cosmic meld that is light years from the country/folk Clark is known for. Sparse, reverb-soaked percussion and smatterings of Fender Rhodes at the intro evoke the theme music for a 70s TV cop drama, before the track lurches into thick textured synths, fuzz bass and a heavy funk groove, over which Clark's heavily treated and plaintive vocals soar. There are echoes of Sly & The Family Stone, Traffic and the Stones' *Gimme Shelter* but the great slabs of sound also evoke British prog at its heaviest. This is distinctly urban music – with session player slickness and a deep, dirty groove. Once again, the backing vocals enhance with their rousing gospel feel.

4 Strength Of Strings

There's a sweeping, cinematic grandeur to the opening strains of this six-and-a-half-minute epic track, which *Rolling Stone* described as "an uncanny hybrid of Delta blues, orchestral rock and cosmic gospel". It's a full two minutes before a word is uttered, as the ethereal dual acoustic/electric guitar motif and falsetto vocal refrains segue into a slow instrumental build-up. It takes a tom fill from drummer Russ Kunkel at 1:30 to launch the track into life, as Clark's collaborator, Jesse Ed Davis contributes ethereal slide guitar. It's one of the most spiritual-sounding tracks on the album.

5 From A Silver Phial

Strident piano chords intro this haunting and beautiful track, an epic 4/4 ballad that fits seamlessly into the 70s LA singer–songwriter mould – all dramatic tom fills and soaring lead guitar. The lyrics are sweeping and poetic: "She was fire on the borderline/ The lion in the fall of roles/ Said she saw the sword of sorrow sunken/ In the sand of searching souls". Once more, there is a real truth and poignancy to Clark's voice, another flawless performance. To their credit, the cast of A-list session players make every note count, always playing for the song, rather than themselves.



JOHN DIETRICH

Although warmly received by critics, *No Other* was a commercial failure and deleted shortly after

COMPELLED TO CREATE

For all his insecurities, Clark was a stunningly talented songwriter, producing songs of real depth and maturity. Drink, drugs and chronic indiscipline certainly hindered the work of the man once dubbed "a hillbilly Shakespeare". But he was prolific and compelled to create. In 1971, he recorded his second solo album *White Light*, an intimate and poetic work, which was critically hailed yet failed to gain commercial success. One year later, he embarked on a third solo album, a slow and costly project that was finally released in 1973 as *Roadmaster*, but only in the Netherlands.

In late 1972, Clark left A&M and was asked to join a reunion of The Byrds. The project soon floundered, but the quality of his material led to a solo deal with Asylum.

"Asylum Records was the young thrusting label of the time," said writer Johnny Rogan in the documentary *The Byrd Who Flew Alone: The Triumphs And Tragedy Of Gene Clark*. "David Geffen could see that Gene Clark was a real talent. This was the perfect opportunity for him to make *the* Gene Clark record."

Geffen set about arranging the best producer for the album and one of the first calls he made was to the veteran producer, songwriter and performer, Thomas Jefferson Kaye. Kaye and Clark bonded immediately and it was a tight collaboration that would last for the next 15 years. Kaye opted to record the album at Village Recorders Studio in west Los Angeles and set about enlisting the cream of LA's session musicians.

> "Gene possessed a really sweet soul. Sometimes I think it would have been better if he'd stayed in Missouri"
> **CHRIS HILLMAN**

Recording began in April 1974 and from the outset it was clear that Kaye had a strong vision for the sound of this new album. Gone were the plaintive country-folk sounds of Clark's previous two albums. Instead, Kaye introduced intricate vocal harmonies, set against dense arrangements and heavy overdubbing. The result was one of the most ambitious albums of the early 70s, with Clark's expressive and intimate vocals fronting a vast, sweeping sound.

COUNTING THE COST

The intention was to create a double album. But of the 13 demoed songs that Clark put forward for the record, eight finished tracks emerged on the acetate that he delivered to David Geffen at the Elektra/Asylum offices on North La Cienega Boulevard. By now, Kaye and Clark had run up costs totalling $100,000, a staggering amount for an artist who had not had a Top 40 hit for eight years.

When Geffen listened to the album, he was allegedly stunned by the huge expense and lack of potential hits. As Barney Hoskyns noted in *Hotel California: Singer-Songwriters And Cocaine Cowboys In The LA Canyons*, "Geffen was horrified that his considerable investment had brought him a mere eight tracks. 'What can I do with eight songs that are six fucking minutes long?' he yelled at Clark. 'Make a proper fucking album'."

According to Hoskyns, Clark watched, crestfallen, as Geffen savagely dropped the acetate in his bin. Clark mentioned in vain that there were five tracks still to finish, but Geffen was disinterested in ploughing any more money into the album.

LASTING LEGACY

No Other was released in September 1974. With no budget for promotion, it sank rapidly without a trace. The few reviews it did receive were negative, with writers lambasting *No Other* for Kaye's "bloated" and "pretentious" production style.

In truth, *No Other* was simply ahead of its time. Clark and Kaye had in fact created an album of peerless beauty, a sprawling and ambitious work that encompassed soaring pop songs with jazz-inflected gospel, country, rock, blues and psychedelia. Clark poured his heart into the making of this album, and never recovered from its commercial failure.

"Gene possessed a really sweet soul who got waylaid by everything and the fight just got taken out of him," recalled fellow Byrd Chris Hillman. "Sometimes I think it would have been better if he'd stayed in Missouri."

In 2014, on the 40th anniversary of *No Other*, Jon Pareles in *The New York Times* highlighted how the passing decades had "burnished *No Other*", going on to suggest that it was the greatest album of its time, "if not all time". It was a view echoed that same year in a review by Thom Jurek for *AllMusic*. "*No Other* remains ripe for continued (re)discovery by succeeding generations of music fans," he wrote. "All told, it reflects the mid 70s better than anything from the time, yet continues to haunt the present with its relevance."

The songs
CONTINUED

6 Some Misunderstanding

Weighty, spiritual themes pervade this track, the real centrepiece of the album, and something of an epic at over eight minutes long. The intimacy of Clark's delivery seems to be pushing against Kaye's gargantuan production at times, but it works. Slow, meandering guitar lines, atonal in parts and swamped in echo, form the intro, before it all cascades into a slow, lumbering groove. There are strains of Neil Young in Clark's delivery as his pained, heartfelt vocals enter after the simmering intro. This is Clark at his most intimate and soulful. Bassist Leland Sklar contributes beautifully judged thirds and fifths high up the fretboard, before it all breaks down at 4:30 to Hammond organ, lightly strummed acoustic guitar and some sublime slide guitar from Oklahoma session player, Jesse Ed Davis. A stunning performance and one of Gene Clark's finest achievements.

7 The True One

After the uplifting opus of *Some Misunderstanding*, the pinched-in conservative strains of this track come as something of a shock. This is straight-down-the-line country, and at this stage in the album its presence feels like a recording from a different age. That said, there is a purity to this song, and Clark's delivery brings an integrity to the lyrics, which seem to reflect on temptation and the excesses within his life. "Changes come so quickly, easily it can seem bizarre/ They say there's a price to pay for going out too far/ You can buy a one way ticket out there all alone/ And you can sit and wonder why/ It's so hard to get back home".

8 Lady Of The North

Despite some reports that *No Other* was conceived under the influence of mescaline and other drugs, Clark's wife Carlie refuted such claims, pointing out that Clark stayed clean throughout his Mendocino years, for the sake of his young children. But when he temporarily returned to LA with his family to begin recording the album, Clark soon fell back into his old ways, rekindling old friendships and developing a zeal for the drug of the moment – cocaine. Disgusted with his behaviour, Carlie moved herself and their sons back to California. Clark moved in with old mucker Doug Dillard, in the Hollywood Hills. It was here, in a haze of cocaine, that the two men wrote this tender and tragic closing song of the album. An achingly poignant conclusion to a landmark record.

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HITS AND MISSES

The murky world of A&R has been responsible for some of the biggest musical discoveries ever to appear on vinyl. But for every Arctic Monkeys, there's a Gay Dad. **Ben Wardle** heads back to the height of the 90s Britpop boom, digs into his little black book and tells the stories of some of those who could have been contenders…

During an interview with the BBC last year, Rob Stringer, the man who signed Manic Street Preachers, and now Sony Music CEO, said: "We have statistical teams now who are literally looking at data all day long to see whether something looks like it's got an audience." But Stringer is swift to acknowledge his A&R team: "There has to be some degree of personality injected into the process…"

A&R (artists and repertoire) is the department responsible for discovering and nurturing talent. Think George Martin, or indeed Simon Cowell. It's no wonder Sony and other majors are bolstering it with big data because statistically, it's more likely that new artists fail to find an audience and disappear into bargain-bin obscurity. *LLV* asked a number of A&Rs for their salutary tales.

THE DISCOVERY

Amber Davies is head of A&R at Warner Chappell Music Publishing. In her five years there, she has signed some of the UK's highest-profile and best-selling artists. Around 2006, while at EMI Music Publishing, she discovered a singer-songwriter called Remi Nicole. "I'd gone down to the studio to meet a rapper and he told me about her. I heard the demo and she had a great voice, lyrically it was really interesting and her songs were really catchy."

Ten years before that, in 1996, Creation head Alan McGee was riding high with the Gallagher brothers. "I took a meeting with Des Penney, who used to manage Flowered Up. He played me a few things, which were all pretty miserable. But at the end he said, 'Oh, these are my pals…' and played me a track by Arnold. They sounded like 1960s/early-70s rock with a bit of Radiohead. I basically signed them and sent them away for a month to record some stuff…"

Meanwhile, over at Food Records, Andy Ross was enjoying similar success with Blur. But there would have been no Food/Parlophone for Damon & co. (then Seymour) if Ross hadn't signed a label deal with EMI back in 1988, for a band he'd found called The Filberts. "I played the tape to my business partner Dave Balfe and he really liked it. It was very melodic, very West Coast," he recalls.

Rightly deciding the name wasn't working, the band changed it to Diesel Park West. "We signed them for very little money, released a single independently and then we graduated to EMI Records and their millions."

Now MD of Warner Chappell, Mike Smith was Blur's publisher in the 90s. After signing a run of hit acts including The Verve, Supergrass and Elastica, he says, "by 1997 we were running on fumes. No one had told the music industry the Britpop bubble had burst." Then along came a band which appeared to have all the makings of success. "They ticked every box and they had an undeniable hit: *To Earth With Love,* the best song since *Suffragette City*." The band? Gay Dad.

At exactly the same time, over at his label Nude, the man who signed Suede, Saul Galpern, was getting excited about another band. "I went to see Ultrasound live and they really blew me away. They were unbelievable: totally bombastic, proggy in a good way; the guitarist reminded me a bit of Bernard [Butler], a fantastic female bass player with an extraordinary, operatic voice. And of course the singer, Tiny. They just looked so dysfunctional in the best possible way.

"Suddenly, they became the 'buzz band'. They had about four offers on the table from majors. We paid too much money for them, but it was so competitive." Smith had the same experience with Gay Dad. "There was massive competition, everybody jumped. By the time we were involved, they'd already signed to London Records. I was running high on my previous run of Britpop success, so I signed them for two albums – a commitment of £800,000!"

While Ultrasound and Gay Dad soaked up industry finances, ex-Cocteau Twin (and *LLV* columnist) Simon Raymonde found himself in charge of his own record label. "The Cocteaus had just broken up and Bella Union had only been going a few months. I had no idea what I was doing at all. Slowly, tapes started coming to the label and one turned up from this guy in Denver. There was not a lot going for it, but I think I gave him some constructive criticism and said he should feel free to come back with more stuff." The artist, John Grant, continued to send Raymonde tapes, each one better than the last. "The band weren't great technically, but I genuinely thought he had a beautiful voice. I decided on a whim that I would bring the band over because we had this studio we were paying rent on in Richmond. So I produced The Czars' first album."

RECORDING AND RELEASE

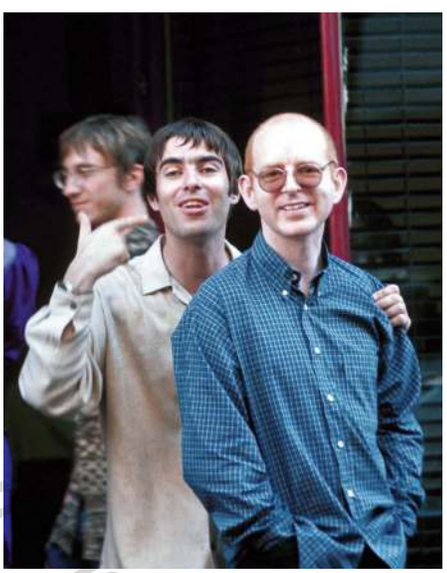
Amber Davis is sanguine about her early discovery of Remi Nicole. "We offered her a relatively sensible [publishing] deal and then it spiralled out of control and became a huge bidding war. She ended up doing a record deal first with Island." Implicit in this statement is that an artist with a record deal can ask for a much larger publishing advance. "Island had done everything right in the campaign. There was just a turn of events where she was slightly unlucky; her direction slightly shifted at one point, the second single was called *Go Mr Sunshine* and [when it was released], it was an extremely rainy summer."

Andy Ross didn't find that major record company investment helped Diesel Park West. "The budget went through the roof. We ended up using [Rolling Stones producer] Chris Kimsey, looking for this world-conquering epic sound. We went from a £100 demo to £100,000 production, plus videos as well.

John Grant's first band, The Czars, failed to gain any traction in the press, while Gay Dad were poisoned by the hype

But the sound we got from this expensive production lost the group's edge; it was too polished."

"I had three producers tell me they weren't able to work with them because the band just ignored everything they said," says Galpern of Ultrasound. "Radiohead producer Nigel Godrich said they were impossible to work with and it didn't help when they slagged him off in the press. The band would argue with each other all the time. They finally decided to make a double album themselves with some engineer mates, who then held us to ransom before releasing the tapes. One of the songs lasted 40 minutes. What was I thinking? *NME* put them on the cover with the strapline Ultrasound: They are gonna be massive."



ROSS GILMORE/REDFERNS/GETTY MICK HUTSON/REDFERNS/GETTY BRIAN RASIC/GETTY

After the runaway success of Oasis, Alan McGee found it much harder to break new bands on his Creation label

"The recording was a nightmare," says Smith of the Gay Dad sessions. "*To Earth With Love* was like Frankenstein's monster – made up of various bits and pieces. They'd gone into the RAK Studios with Tony Visconti, then they went in with [Tears For Fears producer] Chris Hughes. I could feel the hype building. The label wanted a hit. Someone dropped out of a major ad campaign around London and the marketing person at London bought it cheap. So at Christmas there were massive 40-sheet Gay Dad billboards everywhere."

But at least Ultrasound and Gay Dad had the media's attention. Alan McGee struggled to get anyone to care about Arnold: "The tide was against us because Oasis were so fucking big. People were like, 'you've got too much chocolate, fuck off!' That was the vibe. Apart from *Mojo*, the media weren't really having it. We put them out on tour with Bernard Butler and other acts and they were great, but we just couldn't get them away; the media hated [Creation] for having the biggest band in Britain!"

MEDIA INDIFFERENCE

Raymonde experienced media indifference with The Czars. "The first album didn't really register with anybody and the second didn't either! The reviews weren't bad, but there weren't that many of them. We put loads of money into tour support and bringing them over; they supported Low and even David Gray, who was massive at the time. But they weren't great live – I don't think John was really that confident with the band, it always looked painful for him to be on stage."

Despite Gay Dad's debut single going Top 10, the perceived hype poisoned them. Says Smith: "The speeding locomotive was off the rails and not stopping, Cliff was messianic. They ended up selling 60-70,000 albums, which isn't bad for a new band now, but with all the pressure on them at the time it was a disaster."

Ultrasound didn't fare any better. "I knew things weren't going to work out when the band arrived in LA for a meeting with our US label," says Galpern. "Tiny checked into the hotel with no suitcase, just a plastic bag and a loaf of bread he'd brought with him from London. By the time the album came out, we had lost momentum and everyone moved on."

"We just didn't have the luck," says Ross. "By the end, it was unravelling but because so much money had already been spent there was a tendency to keep chucking money at it to make it a success. It was the right band at the wrong time. With hindsight, it was never going to happen."

McGee didn't give up on Arnold despite Creation folding in 1999. "I put another record out by them called *Bahama* in 2001 [on Poptones], but the moment had gone. All the Arnold records are good. None of them you could actually say, 'You've got that wrong'."

"THE TIDE WAS AGAINST US BECAUSE OASIS WERE SO BIG. PEOPLE WERE LIKE, 'YOU'VE GOT TOO MUCH CHOCOLATE, FUCK OFF'"

wonderlands.net

THEY COULD HAVE BEEN CONTENDERS

FIVE RECORDS THAT MISSED THE SPOT

GAY DAD
LEISURE NOISE
B-UNIQUE/LONDON, 1999
Worth the cost of admission just for *To Earth With Love* and heart-breaking ballad *Oh Jim*. The rest of it is pretty damn good, too. US label Capital refused to get involved because of the band's name.
DISCOGS £50 (NM)

ARNOLD
HILLSIDE
CREATION, 1998
Slightly more polished than *The Barn Tapes,* this has stood the test of time well, due to Phil Morris' powerful vocal and strong tunes like *Face* and *Fishsounds*. The press weren't quite as cruel as McGee maintains, *The Telegraph*'s Neil McCormack calling it, "harmonised sunshine of classic West Coast psychedelia."
DISCOGS £30 (NM 2LP)

ULTRASOUND
EVERYTHING PICTURE
NUDE, 1999
Before you do anything, check out the band's Glastonbury performance of *Stay Young*. Fans of Suede will love this and the mighty *Same Band,* but may be confused by the 'dysfunctional' image, which was perhaps ahead of its time.
DISCOGS £30 (VG+)

DIESEL PARK WEST
SHAKESPEARE ALABAMA
FOOD/EMI, 1989
Don't let its ludicrous cheapness on used vinyl put you off the value of this record which, although slightly overproduced, contains some tunes (check out *All The Myths on Sunday* and *Like Princes Do*) that stay lodged in the head long after the needle lifts.
DISCOGS £3 (VG+)

ARNOLD
THE BARN TAPES
CREATION, 1997
Contains the luminescent *Windsor Park*, which anticipates where Travis were to go two years later on *The Man Who…* which is not as bad as it may sound.
DISCOGS £5 (10", VG+)

Raymonde's experience with John Grant suggests that with better timing all these artists could have made it. "Now, one could hardly say that John Grant wasn't successful, but for the first 12 years of us working together there was just nothing going on. I'll always love Midlake for what they did. It's very rare for a band to do something so magnanimous and humble for another artist on the same label.

"He was going through a deep depression, along with drugs and alcohol problems and in 2009, he ended up in hospital. Midlake kindly invited him down to Texas to stay with them. They saved his life in many ways. They helped him make *The Queen Of Denmark* (2010), which was a way more pleasurable experience from start to finish than anything he had previously had."

THE AFTERMATH

Raymonde is clear that these days, it would be financially impossible to keep an unsuccessful artist on a label for 12 years. "That's one thing I've learned: I'll say to a new band, 'don't take an advance if you've already made the record in your bedroom. The first album most likely won't sell, but if you don't take an advance, at least we'll still be in a position to make a second'."

Ross echoes this. "My punk-rock background made me not want to spend too much – if you spend less, you're likely to be given more time to get it right. Diesel Park West were tainted by major-label overspending. With Seymour, we signed them for a small amount of money and, like The Filberts, we changed their name, too!"

"I LEARNED THERE'S NO POINT IN WORKING WITH ANYONE WHO YOU THINK ARE GREAT, BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE YOU LIKE THEM"

Davis took a useful lesson away from the Remi Nicole experience, which has served her well since. "It happened quite early in my career, so it set me up to be in it for the highs and the lows. It can be disheartening, but it's a good learning curve. You've got to stick to your commitment, even when it's not working."

"I definitely learned that there's no point in working with anyone who you think are great but you're not sure you like them…" says Galpern of his Ultrasound days. "You've got to work with people that you really like."

"A lot of companies would have fired me, but they didn't," says Smith. "It was the last time I ever did a deal of that size. I went on to sign The White Stripes, The Libertines and Arcade Fire. When we signed Arctic Monkeys a few years later, it was for £500,000 but we knew we had all those hits."

And what about 'the man who signed Oasis', whose biopic is currently in production with *Trainspotting*'s Ewen Bremner playing his younger self? "I learned that sometimes people won't give you a break because you're doing too well!"

Choice Cuts #31

Henry Manfredini

FRIDAY THE 13TH ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

WAXWORK RECORDS

What could be cooler for a slasher movie soundtrack than blood-filled vinyl? **Glen Bushell** sees red

The slasher movie trend of the 1980s produced many memorable characters and pant-soiling moments. Rising out of this boom, the *Friday The 13th* franchise would go on to be one of the most iconic and best-selling of all time. The original film, centring around a mother seeking bloody revenge over the neglect of her son, was panned and adored in equal measure. Regardless of your opinion of the movie, Harry Manfredini's nerve-shredding score remains one of the best of all time and helped set the mood perfectly.

In 2014, the New Orleans-based Waxwork Records announced they would be bringing the complete score to vinyl for the first time. They produced a number of variants, but it was the extremely limited 'blood-filled' variant that created the greatest buzz among the ever-growing community of soundtrack collectors. It was clear vinyl, filled with a red liquid that resembled blood and moved around the record as it was played or tilted. It may have been a gimmick, but it did look impressive.

It was originally believed that 100 copies were manufactured, but the owner of Waxwork Records, Kevin Dredge, has confirmed that the number was closer to 75, and some of those were damaged, resulting in the label taking delivery of blood-soaked boxes. The album has become quite the collector's item over the past few years, with very few appearing for sale, but when they do they carry an average resale price of around £500. Some have even reached the £1,000 mark for die-hard collectors.

It wasn't the first liquid-filled record and it likely won't be the last, but the fake blood fits the theme of this iconic slasher move and score perfectly. ●

Wax Facts

HENRY MANFREDINI
FRIDAY THE 13TH ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
BLOOD-FILLED
2014
£500

Worldmags.net

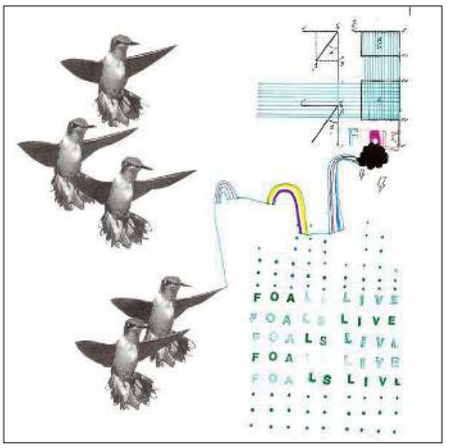
TRANSGRESSIVE RECORDS

15 AT 15

One of the UK's most vibrant young indie labels turns 15 this year. Here are 15 collectable vinyl treasures from their first decade and a half

Over the past 15 years, London-based label Transgressive, founded from Tim Dellow and Toby L's student loan cheques, has brought us a wealth of releases from the likes of Foals, Let's Eat Grandma, At The Drive-In, Africa Express, Marika Hackman and Graham Coxon. Here, Dellow shares the stories behind 15 collectable gems they've released over that period. Be it for the music (it's always about the music) or the aesthetic, *Long Live Vinyl* met up with Tim to talk through some of the label's favourite curios…

Oxford's Foals are one of the biggest artists on the Transgressive roster



1 FOALS
LIVE EP
[TRANS049]

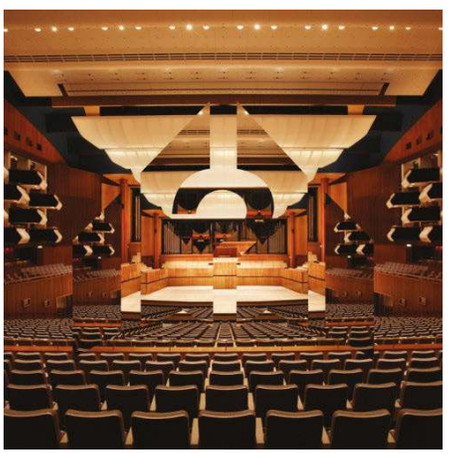
"One of the best live bands of the time, we knew that they wanted to push themselves away from that sound and experiment in the studio for their debut – so we captured a blistering early performance as an 'official bootleg' from Liars Club in Nottingham, insane versions of early singles *Hummer* and *Mathletics* and the only version of *XXXXXX*, their early set opener.

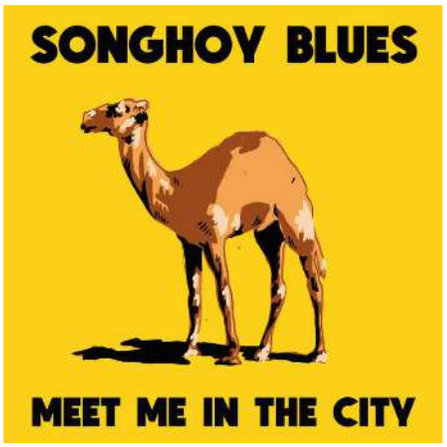
"Each cover had one of the birds hand-customised by a different band member. Other vinyl goodness we're particularly proud of from this band includes the etched 12" with *Balloons* produced by Kieran Hebden and the amazing new deluxe box for *Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost*, with Part 2 available now as a limited edition picture disc."

DISCOGS £31

2 MYSTERY JETS
LIVE AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
[TRANS 159]

"We've put out some special limited edition live albums (the vinyl-only The Antlers double and Pulled Apart By Horses In Leeds spring to mind), but this is something special. A stellar





performance from their Radlands tour at a prestigious venue, we went all out – 2x gold vinyl, gatefold sleeve, poster and replica tour programme… guest appearances from Laura Marling and Johnny Lloyd, and of course a catalogue of songs that most would die for, make this a coveted rare record that you can still enjoy on streaming services!"
DISCOGS £61

3 SONGHOY BLUES
MEET ME IN THE CITY EP
[TRANS429X]

"A recent release from the desert-rock troubadours. This EP features their first English-language track, composed for them by Will "Bonnie Prince Billy" Oldham and Matt Sweeney, along with an incredible Fela Kuti cover featuring Femi Kuti. A glorious package designed by Matt De Jong, with a die-cut back sleeve and yellow vinyl, and a glorious pre-cursor to their third album proper that's coming next year."
DISCOGS £12.50

4 MARIKA HACKMAN
ANY HUMAN FRIEND
[SP1314/AMFLP0013]

"Another management act for us here… First copies of the Sub Pop Loser edition or the UK AMF pressing come on marbled peach/pink vinyl respectively – and both are sure-fire collector's pieces for the future. The album itself is a masterpiece – bold, queer and tuneful, an important record for our times. We also learnt just how much red tape there is about moving livestock for the iconic cover image…"
DISCOGS £20

Transgressive worked with Marika Hackman on her *Any Human Friend* album

5 KOKOKO!
FONGOLA
[TRANS417X/TRANS417XRT]

"Following a hand-stamped white label EP, the debut album proper from KoKoKo! come from one of the most distinctive new artists around. From the DRC, this exuberant, clubby experimentalism is so refreshingly new, it warrants a place in any cutting-edge collection. It's available on limited red and yellow vinyl exclusively from Rough Trade shops. Don't hang about!"
DISCOGS £20

6 JEREMY WARMSLEY
DIRTY BLUE JEANS
[TRANS 045]

"Many labels have stories of packaging that lost them money on every sale, and this is our contribution to that cause. A hand-stitched denim sleeve contains a 7" AND a DVD, with an exclusive B-side and all of the music videos from his ahead-of-its-time debut album. Jeremy was one of the first musicians to combine home electronica with classic songwriting, and over the course of the two excellent albums we made with him, he always went the extra mile on special B-sides and creative explorations – and we were proud to journey with him."
DISCOGS £3

7 PULLED APART BY HORSES
I PUNCHED A LION IN THE THROAT
[TRANS127]

STEVE GULLICK

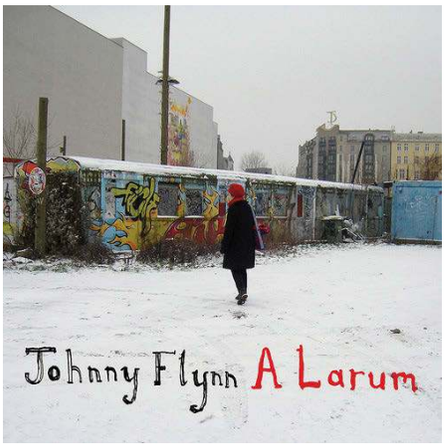
Worldmags.net

"We treat every release as a work of art, but PABH took this literally – hand drawing 500 different front covers for each individual 7". This classic two-track single taken from their essential debut was backed by the exclusive B-side *Grave Dole* and is face-meltingly, ear-shreddingly brilliant."
DISCOGS £7

8 JOHNNY FLYNN
A LARUM
[VERTIGO 1766662]

"Our first management client, this incredible album started the career of a true auteur. Recorded in Bear Creek studios, a magical barn near where they filmed *Twin Peaks*, this album was lovingly pressed to double vinyl with a pop-up stage diorama and individual players. The 'secret song' reprise takes up the whole last side, too. Due to rising Discogs prices, we're reissuing this (minus the pop-up) and his equally essential second album *Been Listening* this year!"
DISCOGS £75

Transgressive is reissuing a pair of Johnny Flynn's highly sought after albums



9 LOYLE CARNER
TIERNEY TERRACE/ FLORENCE
[RAD014]

"Our singles imprint paradYse has launched the likes of Marika Hackman, Blaenavon and Calpurnia – and this incredible debut from Loyle Carner. Two incredibly intimate songs, set off by a family photo on the cover. A powerful debut from an important artist."
DISCOGS £28

10 THE SHINS
PHANTOM LIMB
[TRANS 046]

"We licensed the essential album *Wincing The Night Away* from our friends at Sub Pop and made a bunch of exclusive 7"s for each of the singles for our territory – including an EP with a 'digital record player', signed versions and multi-format releases, but it's the Transgressive debut that sticks in the memory. A classic earworm that truly gets under your skin… then we cut the two exclusive B-sides on parallel grooves – meaning you didn't know which of the two was going to play when you dropped the needle!"
DISCOGS £4

11 AT THE DRIVE-IN
ONE ARMED SCISSOR [THE FIELD REMIX]
[TRANS161]

"The band approached us about re-releasing their stellar debut and all-time classic *Relationship Of Command* albums, which we did lovingly on coloured vinyl and then full press. As the band were on hiatus, we were keen to cast a new light on the catalogue, and the band agreed to a remix by The Field. The minimal techno technician took key elements of *One Armed Scissor* and stretched it into an electric krautrock workout. We thought that most of the fans with open minds, particularly those who had followed their development as The Mars Volta, would dig it, but it proves to this day a divisive release – and that kind of challenging of ideas and development of music is something that we relish! This is an incredibly limited, hand-stamped 12" pop-up on the secondary market, and it's also streaming now for those who are curious!"
DISCOGS £8

HANNA-KATRINA JEDROSZ

Norwich's finest: Let's Eat Grandma have released a pair of albums on the label

12 LET'S EAT GRANDMA
DEEP SIX TEXTBOOK/SINK
[TRANS226X]

"While sophomore album *I'm All Ears* is one of our proudest releases, this band's genius was evident from the debut single. The distant drowning of *Deep Six Textbook* stopped us in our tracks, and the non album B-side *Sink* became one of the best-known songs from that first period after a killer performance on *…Later With Jools Holland*.

DISCOGS £20

13 SOPHIE
OIL OF EVERY PEARL'S UN-INSIDES
[TRANS368X/ TRANS368XX]

"This important album is a beauty on vinyl. Gatefold coloured vinyl with exclusive photos and a gigantic double-sided poster, the record sounds immaculate. From the tender opening of *It's Okay To Cry* to the brutal *Whole New World/Pretend World*, this is the sound of an artist putting everything on the line and reshaping a life through sound. It's utterly essential."

DISCOGS £22

Sophie's visionary pop has seen her become one of Transgressive's stars

14 FLUME
SKIN COMPANION EP 1/ COMPANION EP 2
[TRANS252X/TRANS 287X)

"We've done some incredible releases with Flume on vinyl – his albums are masterpieces. There are two mixtapes which are absolutely mindblowing, one-offs, like the timeless *Some Minds* and his rarer-than-hen's-teeth Arcade Fire remix 12", but these two companion EPs are perfect. With jaw-dropping artwork from Jonathan Zwada, they build on the ideas of his Grammy-winning *Skin* LP and spark new dimensions in electronic sound."

DISCOGS £10/£12

15 THE YOUNG KNIVES
VOICES OF ANIMALS AND MEN
[TRANS036LP]

"Our first 'hit' and Mercury-nominated album, and one which we're proudest of. With production from Gang Of Four legend Andy Gill and artwork of lost British traditions from Tapin Gofton. The singles speak for themselves, but its flow as an album is a really fulfilling journey that's aged fantastically well. The vinyl contained a bonus 7" with non-album track *Kramer Vs. Kramer* and their stunning cover of *Kids In America*."

DISCOGS £22 ●

CHARLOTTE PATMORE

worldrecords.net

DIGGING FOR VICTORY

Selling records is clearly at the forefront of what **Mark O'Shaughnessy** does, but sharing experiences with people is also hugely important

Two men came into my shop one quiet Wednesday afternoon in early September. What's so interesting about that, I hear you cry? One of them was elderly and wheelchair-bound and the other one was his son. Again, not that unusual per se. Read on…

I've always insisted on real wheelchair access in each of my shops, and we have purposely set out our store's internal geography so that everybody can comfortably browse the stock. The older gentleman, whose name I learned was Matthew, appeared to have undergone an absolutely beastly operation. I later found out bone from his hip had been grafted into his jaw and he was struggling badly with the after-effects of this hellish procedure. He was in a lot of pain and barely able to shift his weight in his wheelchair.

His face was disjointed and twisted, yet here he was, sitting in my record shop, head-nodding, listening intently to some of the music Matthew loved. I kept the tunes coming for well over an hour and was proud to be able to turn him on to some music he'd never heard before. He bought each and every single item I played for him, even delving into new releases like The New Mastersounds' LP on One Note records. He absolutely loved The Lewis Express' C*lap Your Hands* LP on ATA records, which he motioned me over to tell me sounded like peak-time Ramsey Lewis on Cadet. How right he was, and both LPs were added instantly to the growing pile. This guy had class by the bucketload. I'm guessing his prognosis was now for palliative care.

His son had parked him over by the sofa near one of my big wall-mounted speakers; over by the DJ booth, we had a proper old gits' natter. He said he loved Northern Soul, so I played him a little stack of UK originals. I also showed him my 'Keep The Faith' tattoo, so that he knew my Soul credentials were in good order. He then went on to tell me that he was originally from Manchester and had gone to the famed Twisted Wheel all-nighters back in the day! This guy clearly knew and loved his music! He bought each and every one of those 7"s I played him, no hesitation. And there were a few pricey ones in there too, believe me!

It was quite difficult to make out what Matthew was saying most of the time because his jaw grafts made speech difficult, but I could just see from the look in his eye and the way that he motioned his head up and down to my steady stream of Etta James, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye and Ray Charles (his favourite artist of all time, luckily I had very recently taken in a huge Daddy Ray collection of 200 items) that he was clearly enjoying himself. He was spoiled for choice, but picked out one of Ray's best, *Genius + Soul = Jazz* and added it to the pile. An immaculate choice.

We talked and talked about Northern Soul, Tamla Motown, doo-wop, R&B, jazz… he was a huge fan of all of these genres and ended up spending several hundred pounds on records. Yet it wasn't the nice sale that made my day, it was the interaction between father and son that kept a constant smile on my face. They had this lovely, warm bond which was clear for all to see and spoke lovingly and politely to one another at all times, with the son constantly ensuring that his dad was OK but not suffocating him either. This is what true affection and familial love should be like.

What is it Bob Marley said? "Some people are so poor, all they have is money"

I genuinely blinked back tears several times during this unforgettable hour and had to go out into the back room a couple of times to compose myself – just to observe the mutual warmth and unconditional love between a father and his son on show here felt like a privilege.

I'm welling up right now just thinking about it again. I couldn't help but grab the son's hand to shake it, and felt the need to tell him that he was to be commended for the way he was looking after his dad, and I secretly thought to myself that I hoped my three sons would hold me in this same high regard and level of care when I reached that age. It was an extremely moving moment and made me realise exactly why I love my job so much.

Even if they had left without spending even so much as a quid, it would have been no problem, because what they gave me that day was worth more than money can ever be. What was it that Bob Marley said? "Some people are so poor, all they have is money". I've chewed this statement over and over in my mind down the years and it took absolutely ages to make real sense of it, but I eventually realised what Tuff Gong meant: money means absolutely nothing, and this experience clarified that statement for me. ●

Mark O'Shaughnessy is the owner of Resolution Records in Bath and has been a professional record dealer since 1993

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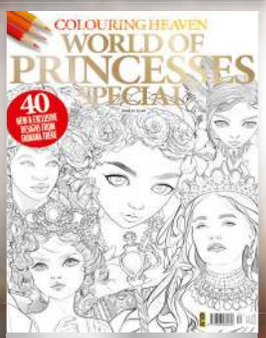

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TALKING SHOP

The Record Album

BRIGHTON

Its veteran proprietor may have retired, but this soundtrack specialist in Britain's unofficial vinyl capital is still very much in business. **Garth Cartwright** visits good old Sussex by the sea

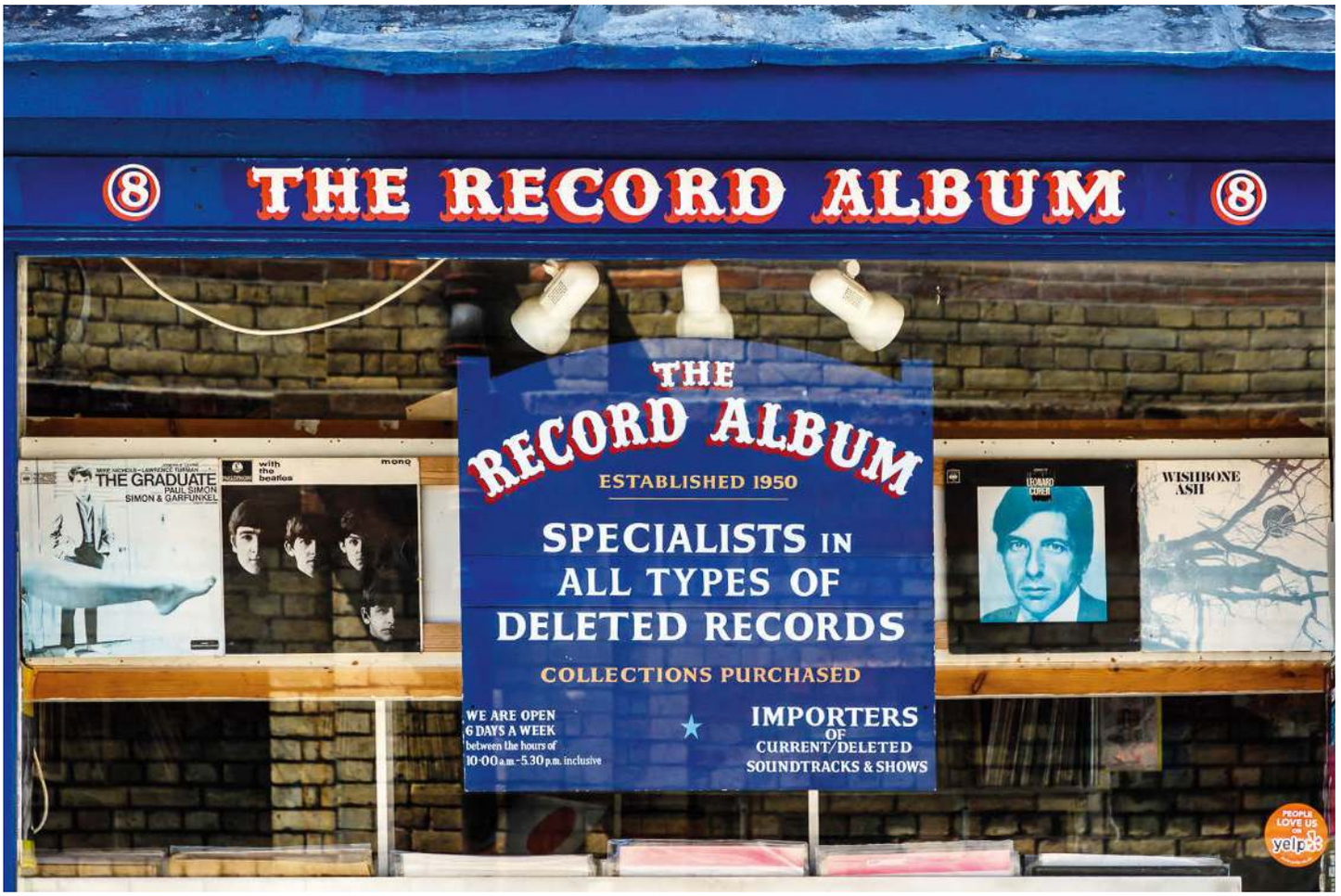
The Record Album is Brighton's oldest record shop, having begun trading in 1948. Since then, it has changed location a couple of times, but from 1960 to 2018 it was run by George Ginn, a lovely man who prided himself on his shop refusing to change with the times: not a single CD was ever sold here, nor was a credit card ever allowed to purchase the vinyl and shellac George stocked.

Ginn's cash register was a huge old thing that was first put to use in the 1950s. "Like me, it's lost its zing" joked Ginn, and entering The Record Album was akin to stepping into a time capsule. Admittedly, Ginn charged 21st Century prices – surviving more than a half century in the record trade ensured he was no fool – and ensured his stock, a mix of old and new albums (plus selections of 45s and 78s), stayed fresh. And it was the stock that truly made The Record Album famous: the shop was the UK's only specialist soundtrack record shop. Ginn was a lifelong aficionado of movie soundtracks and thus, having taken over The Record Album in 1960 when it sold all kinds of music, he carefully shaped it into a shop where movie/TV soundtracks and original cast recordings were the shop's focus.

I interviewed Ginn for my book *Going For A Song: A Chronicle Of The UK Record Shop* and was charmed by this droll octogenarian who happily shared his passion for all kinds of soundtracks – George's all-time favourite is Erich Wolfgang Korngold's *Kings Row* (a lush, orchestrated work that accompanies a minor 1942 Ronald Reagan film), but he also got animated when he played the pulsing electronic soundtrack to obscure 1985 sci-fi film *Warning Sign* by Craig Safan. George loved movie soundtracks and his enthusiasm was infectious. When I dropped back into The Record Album – which sits right above Brighton Station – I was surprised to find a youthful figure behind the counter. "You're not George!" I exclaimed. He nodded, obviously exasperated at being told this, and mentioned how his dad and a friend had bought the shop, George's health finally having forced him to sell up.

Payment by card is now accepted, but little else has changed and I'm pleased to report that, more than a year on, The Record Album remains Europe's foremost soundtrack shop. And CD free. The new owners are David Chappell and Keith Blackmore, two local music lovers who are determined to keep The Record Album going. Neither man had run any kind of shop before, let alone a veteran, specialist record shop, but after a year at the helm the duo are happy to announce that The Record Album is thriving.

"Keith was a collector himself and a regular customer of George's," says Chappell. "18 months ago, he popped in for some Christmas shopping and George surprised him by asking, 'I don't suppose you'd like to buy the shop would you?' George, immortal figure though he seemed to all Brighton record lovers, was 88 and having some health issues. This was too great a temptation to resist and Keith



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enlisted me. We had worked together at *The Times* for more than 20 years. It's been wonderful and, so far, modestly profitable. The shop has an immense social and cultural importance in Brighton and it has been a joy to inherit that."

Little has changed about The Record Album, beyond the absence of George, who was a familiar figure over the years, sitting behind the counter reading *The Daily Telegraph*, always happy to offer his waspish opinion on music (he certainly was no fan of rock, even though he was happy to count Nick Cave, Warren Ellis and members of Radiohead among his best customers) and politics (don't ask…). It remains a gem of a record shop.

Beyond the thousands of soundtrack and original cast LPs, new and used, The Record Album has always striven to import its LPs from across Europe, the US and further afield, while selectively buying from those who want to offload their collections.

The shop has a decent selection of 78s and 45s, as well as an enclave tucked away past the counter that features classical LPs. And in the main part of the shop, George always stocked other genres he felt his customers were interested in: light orchestral, exotica, Country & Western, soul, disco… while ensuring that excellent-quality pressings of all kinds of music were available.

I've shopped at The Record Album for well over a decade. Initially, I sought out soundtracks to spaghetti Western and East European movies of the communist era – TRA being one of the few places I ever found either. Getting to know George, who was a charming proprietor, meant I'd spend longer in the shop and dig, coming away with LPs by the likes of doomed country singer Gary Stewart, jazz by Chris Barber and 45s by The Equals and The Dells. It really was a gem of a record shop.

Thankfully, today, with Keith and David at the controls, it remains so. And the new owners have set about ensuring The Record Album is expanding its stock while remaining the only specialist soundtrack shop in these islands.

"We take cards these days, and have revamped the website, but George certainly knew what he was doing, so we have tried to build on the strengths he left us," says Chappell. "The Record Album has long been famous across Europe for its soundtracks and we have done our best to live up to and we hope exceed the standards George set. I think he would grudgingly concede we have a bigger and better range than ever. We have also beefed up our selection of rock and pop stock and are developing a modern jazz speciality to complement the excellent big band and trad selection George left us. We are gradually reducing the space we give to classical music, but we still have a vast number of records available. We still take a dim view of CDs, though."

George was a classical music fan, hence the enclave, but he admitted to me when I interviewed him that there was less and less demand for classical LPs these days (thus the sad closures of both Harold Moore's of Soho and Waterloo's Gramex in 2017). Chappell chuckles wistfully when I mention this.

"George rather neglected to tell us that when we bought the shop! Seriously, though, classical generally remains a hard sell, but we're always looking for those high-quality, rare recordings that command big prices. The local Brighton Music College students are in from time to time to browse the classical section. As are the dedicated collectors, and it's something we should always have in."

Taking over a record shop so strongly associated with one proprietor can be a challenge; certain customers may dislike any sense of change, but David and Keith believe they are both retaining the loyalists and attracting a new generation.

"We do have many regulars, many inherited from George, but now some new ones too. Brighton must have a strong claim to be the vinyl capital of Britain, we reckon there are at

> **You won't find too many bargains if we've done our job right, but you will find high-quality records**

Record Breakers

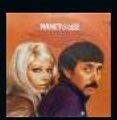
5 GUARANTEED TOP SELLERS IN THE SHOP

VARIOUS ARTISTS
TRAINSPOTTING OST
"We can't keep it in the shop and we're always looking for the numbered version."

ENNIO MORRICONE
THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OST
"There's an enduring and perhaps even growing interest in Morricone."

SEU JORGE
THE LIFE AQUATIC OST
"One shopper hated it so much he asked us to take it off the turntable, but it's always in demand."

KATE BUSH
HOUNDS OF LOVE
"All her records, with the odd exception of *Lionheart*, fly out from the bins."



NANCY SINATRA
& LEE HAZELWOOD
NANCY & LEE
"This LP is always wanted even though it doesn't feature their greatest hit."

least 10 other excellent record shops in Brighton and Hove – so we are the first stop for anyone coming via train, being literally next door to Brighton station. That means we see a lot of familiar faces."

Soundtrack albums have been highly collectable for a long time – the likes of Ennio Morricone, John Carpenter and John Williams have very devoted fans, while certain genres (horror, sci-fi, thrillers, even porn/erotica) also attract completists. This means certain titles can go for a lot of money. Yet the most expensive album that David and Keith have sold so far was a mono Mint condition copy of *Revolver*. There's a certain irony here in that George was not a fan of The Beatles (and *Revolver* isn't a soundtrack).

"We are sworn to silence on what we got for that *Revolver*, but it remains our highest-priced sale," says Chappell. "We have had quite a few records going for £150-£250. As you know, some soundtracks command hefty prices, and we aim for the collectors."

Ah, the collectors! Any specialist record shop is going to have to deal with the occasional eccentric or obsessive collector. How are the duo, I wonder, finding their customer base?

"Oh, we attract a pretty likeable bunch of collectors. Being soundtrack specialists, we are fortunate that overseas visitors to the UK are always being directed to us by a few of the London stores. They love having their photographs taken in such a curio store. Earlier this year, a couple of James Bond fanatics from Belgium came in and spent two hours comparing what they already had (a lot) with what we had on offer, and went away very happy with about 10 soundtracks, mostly rare Japanese pressings. You could say we have a Licence To Thrill!

"We are also often used by radio stations to stage interviews with musicians – Guy Bellamy of 107 Meridian FM is a particularly lively host when he comes in, and always guarantees a couple of fun hours for us and anyone who happens to be in the shop at the time. And we have our fair share of celebrities and touring musicians popping in."

In an age when some collectors are happy to do all their record buying on the internet, The Record Album aims to make visiting their emporium a special occasion.

"We're small, and we hope friendly, but we have big dreams. The shop, not the internet, is firmly at the heart of our business. We don't sell anything online unless it has been in the shop for at least 30 days. We want people to come in and browse and take their time about it. You won't find too many bargains if we've done our job right, but you will find high-quality records both rare and not-so-rare. And you definitely won't find a better shop anywhere for soundtracks."

"We are cautiously, happily optimistic about the shop's future," notes Chappell. "We think people will always want, and want to shop for, lovely things, even in a digital age. And what could be lovelier than a record?" Indeed. ●

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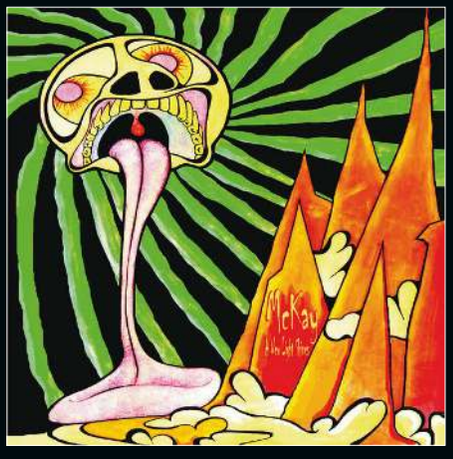
Guerssen Records

The well-established Catalonian reissue label offers a neat line in psych and garage from all corners of the globe. **Chris Parkin** tops up his Uruguayan freakbeat collection



It's easy to forget that there was once a time when hunting down old records mentioned in music magazines, books and sleevenotes was like *The Detectorists*' pursuit of Viking gold: an addictive but fruitless quest. That hunt, though, is exactly what inspired so many of our original, older reissue imprints – such as Catalonia psych specialists Guerssen Records. "Back then, things were out of reach, especially if you were living, as I do, in a semi-remote small town where nothing happens," explains Antoni Gorgues, who started the label in 1996. "It's what made discovery exciting."

Not that Gorgues himself possesses a photographic memory of the last 23 years and 500 releases. "It's confusing when I have to remember what I was thinking back then. It was an exciting time of my life – too much happening all at once," he says, explaining what it was that set him on his singular path through far-out music. "Psychedelics came first. I also listened to a lot of different music in my early teens, and then started to dig into the classic 60s acts, then all the garage stuff, which is the obvious bridge to psychedelia. It's such a wide field; you can stay there for decades."

Scrolling through Guerssen's sprawling catalogue now is to fall headfirst down a rabbit hole of reverb and lysergic wig-outs. There's so much to explore, from Norway's brown-acid rockers Lucifer Was and 80s psych revivalists Tyrnaround to private-press wyrd folk artists and avant-garde outsiders such as Chelique Sarabia, whose *Revolución Electrónica En Música Venezolana* was a 1973 Christmas present to Venezuelan customers of the Shell Company. Gorgues eventually set up different sub labels to bring order to the chaos. For example: "Pharaway Sounds is for anything exotic, lots of Turkish psych-funk-folk there, while Mental Experience is for experimental music, and Espacial Discos is for more disco-oriented 80s stuff."

"Psychedelia is a wide field; you can stay there for decades"

Although he's reluctant to single out specific releases, Gorgues' favourites to date – and he would list 50-plus if he was allowed – include Erkin Koray's three albums of 70s Anatolian psychedelia; US psych crooner Damon's cracked 1969 acid-fuzz rarity *Song Of A Gypsy*; Basque acid-folk band Haizea's *Hontz Gaua*; and *Pops De Vanguardia* by 60s Paraguayan garage-rockers Jodi. The big turning points for Guerssen, though, were *Psychotic Overkill* and *The Axeman Cometh*, two big-selling anthologies of doom-heavy sludge by late-60s and early-70s UK proto-metallers Wicked Lady.

The monopolisation of the reissue market by major labels since the start of the vinyl revival has, says Gorgues, made it harder for cottage-industry operations like his. But on the flipside, the internet has made it easier to locate and license rare, unreleased and privately pressed records that need to be heard – even if their creators' minds are long blown from overindulgence. Right now, Gorgues is putting the final touches to a series of reissues by 60s Uruguayan freakbeat band Los Shakers – a labour of love that has been a long time in the works. Proof, perhaps, that even after 23 years, Gorgues' passion for psychedelic thrills remains undimmed. ●

Reviews

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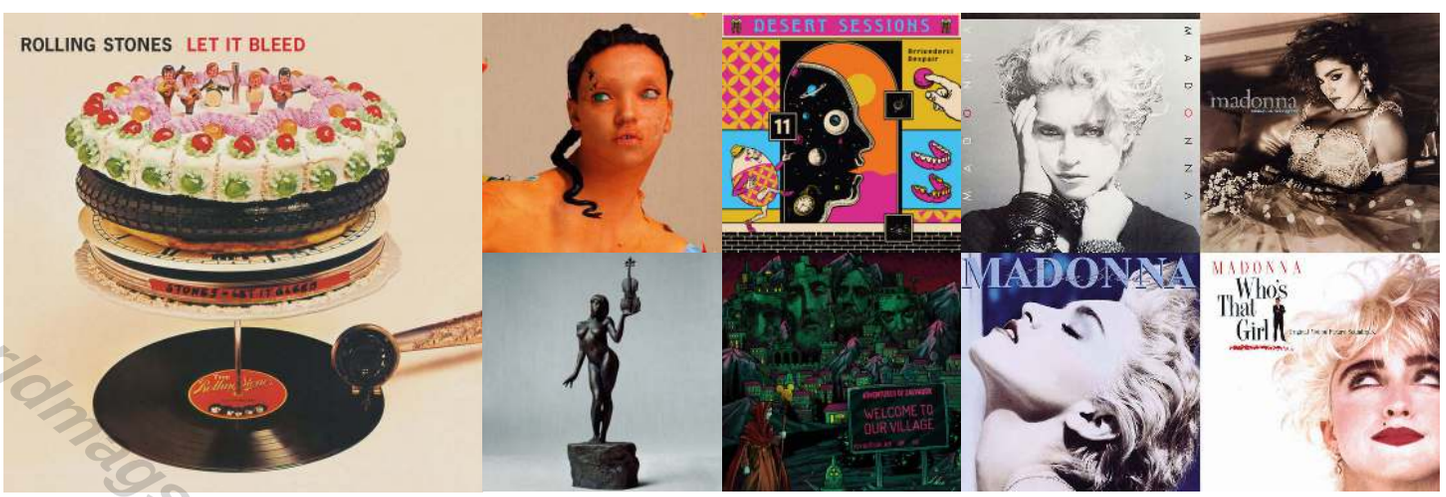

PENNIE SMITH

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Prince

1999: SUPER DELUXE EDITION
WARNER

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

Across 10 LPs and a DVD, the vaults of this breakout album have been raided to produce a boxset of pitch-perfect proportions. **John Earls** wallows in Prince's 1982 otherworldliness

SUPER DELUXE EDITION

LPs 1& 2
Remastered Album

LPs 3 & 4
Promo & B-Sides

LPs 5 & 6
Vault, Part 1

LPs 7 & 8
Vault, Part 2

LPs 9 & 10
Live In Detroit, Nov. 1982 (Early Show)

DVD
Live In Houston, Dec. 1982 (Late Show)

Let's make this clear immediately: what Warner have done with the first true deluxe edition of a Prince album is perfect. It's the platonic ideal of a vinyl boxset. It takes 10 LPs and a Blu-Ray DVD, but here is everything from the CD/streaming edition of *1999* on six hours of vinyl. As Prince's estate manager Michael Howe told *Long Live Vinyl*: "We're big fans of vinyl. It's a more satisfying experience so, when it came to making everything available, we said, 'Great, let's make the vinyl boxset complete'."

Howe's attitude helps make *1999* the year's best reissue. Whereas the expanded *Purple Rain* reissue from 2015 was a frustrating compromise, the 23 demos and alternative takes on *1999* show the rumours of how much brilliant music Prince was making in the 1980s are true. Alongside a more intimate version of *International Lover* and a breathless early run-through of *Purple Rain* rarity *Possessed* are 17 songs Prince never released at all. True, you can hear him get bored of *Bold Generation* halfway through singing it. But a dozen songs could have made another brilliant Prince album in their own right. Lyrical iffiness aside, *Vagina* and *Feel U Up* are prime Prince filth in the mould of *Lady Cab Driver*. *Rearrange* is *Raspberry Beret*'s hot cousin. Prince rarely did straight-up better than *Yah, You Know*.

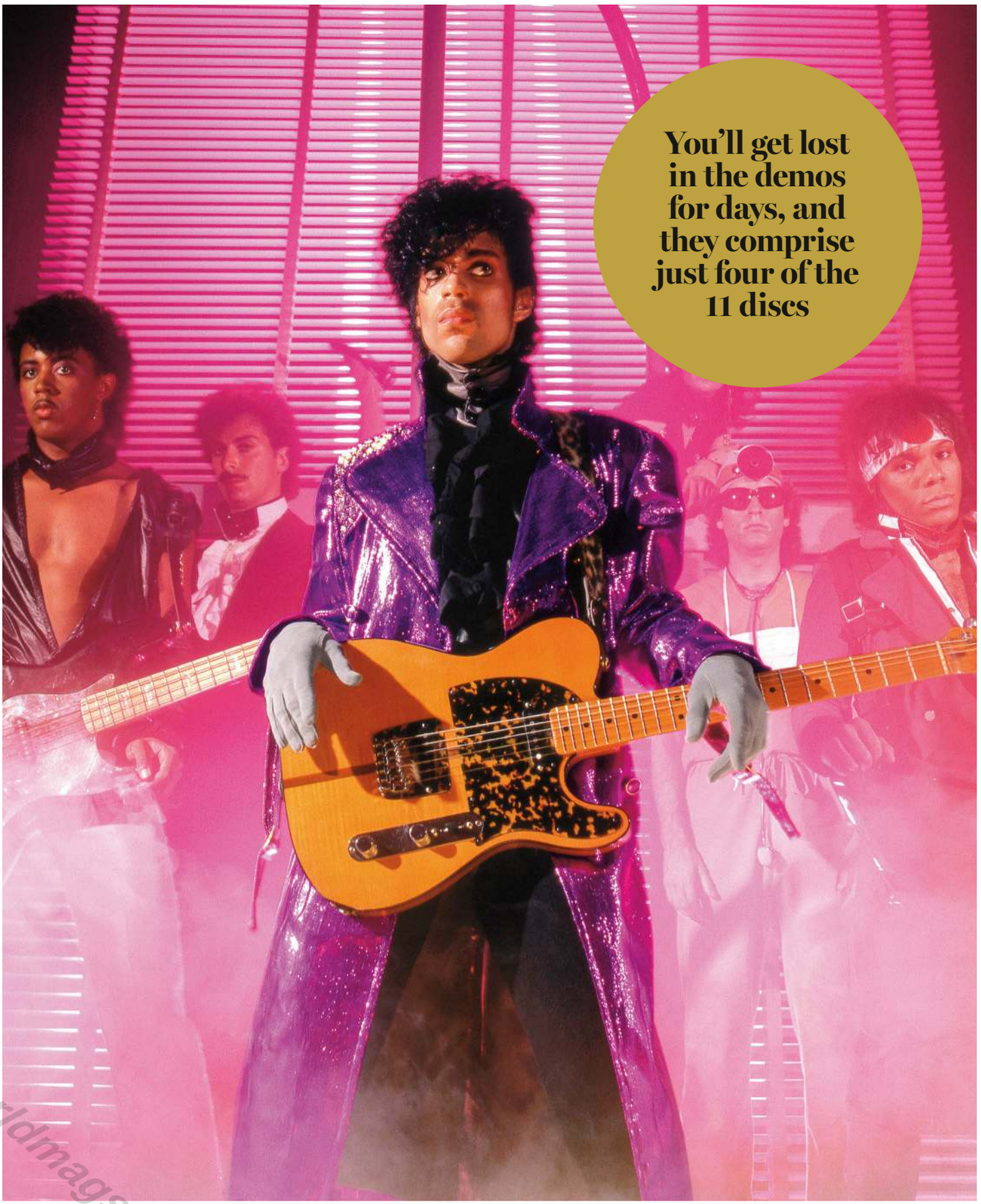
You'll get lost in those demos for days, and they comprise just four of the 11 discs. A homecoming Detroit show a month after the album's release is a joy, as you can sense Prince realising he's finally about to become a superstar in a performance that's teasing and playful even by his standards. This goes double for a Christmas gig in Houston on the Blu-Ray, where you can see just how otherworldly Prince's brilliance was in 1982.

If there is a petty quibble to be had, it's that the B-sides and remixes discs shouldn't be so strictly chronological – hopefully, Warner will spread the songs out a bit next time, rather than have mono/radio/alternative edits of the same hit bleed interchangeably into each other.

With Howe having confirmed to *LLV* that similarly thorough expanded Prince albums are on the way, it'll be interesting to see whether or not they'll be released chronologically. Whatever happens, *1999* is a great album to start with. Not only are there so many wonderful extras, but the original album is wonderful and, in hindsight, an odd phenomenon.

Brilliant singles as the title track and *Little Red Corvette* are, how did a 70-minute double album become the one to make Prince stellar? The short answer is because there's something to keep every music fan of 1982 happy. There's a lot going on in *1999* and it really does need that loose running time to hold it all in. After all, we know *1999* could have been a 6LP studio album and it still wouldn't have been a second too long.

10



You'll get lost in the demos for days, and they comprise just four of the 11 discs

ALLEN BEAULIEU

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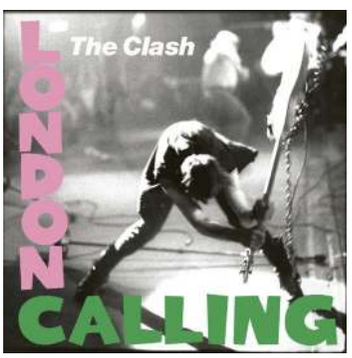
The Clash

LONDON CALLING

SONY

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE



There's the exhibition at The Museum Of London (it runs until April next year) showcasing the bass Paul Simonon smashed on stage for the *London Calling* cover. The three surviving band members are also reuniting for an on-stage interview by Don Letts at the British Film Institute in December. Christmas stockings will, undoubtedly, be full of new memorabilia tome *The London Calling Scrapbook*. In among all the 40th anniversary celebrations, the album itself has been relatively ignored. Now, every generation of vinyl buyers knows *London Calling* is as good as double albums get. It's such a freewheeling exploration, it deserves all the accolades it gets. The band would start to believe their own hype and get lost in triple albums soon enough but, in 1979, The Clash really could fire out 19 songs and only get it wrong once: surely nobody rates *Lover's Rock*? That sloppy jam apart, it's a marvel just how much overlooked brilliance is contained here. While *London Calling* is celebrated as a whole, critics don't mention enough that strong album tracks such as *Hateful* and *Four Horsemen* are the equal of its singles. On the 1% chance you don't already own *London Calling*, kindly rectify that immediately. 40 years on, it's still quite the ride. ***John Earls***

10

The Rolling Stones

LET IT BLEED (50TH ANNIVERSARY DELUXE EDITION)

ABKCO

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

The final Stones album of the 60s, *Let It Bleed* was also their last on Decca, meaning Allen Klein's estate have one last chance to go to town on the catalogue. With the exception of the In Mono albums collection, *Let It Bleed* is by far the most lavish package ABKCO have assembled: an 80-page book, three lithographs and the *Honky Tonk Women 7"* join the album's original poster. Crucially, the album itself is presented on both vinyl and CD in the box, in mono and stereo editions. It's not cheap at £130, but *LLV* has seen much worse value recently. To these ears, the mono version no longer does the Stones' experimentation justice, but at least you get the option. Continuing the golden run started by the previous year's *Beggars Banquet, Gimme Shelter* is matched for darkness by *Midnight Rambler,* while *Monkey Man* is a sequel to *Sympathy For The Devil* in pitch-black grooves. It's not all paranoia and sulphur, as Mick Taylor is introduced gently into the Stones on the relaxed *Live With Me* and the album's only annoyance, the unnecessary *Country Honk* version of *Honky Tonk Women*. Keith Richards' first album vocal, on *You Got The Silver,* remains one of his most affecting and by the wondrous finale *You Can't Always Get What You Want,* the Stones were the perfect blend of danger and experience. With the band understandably refusing to play ball on any recording laying in the vaults, it's hard to see how ABKCO could have had a better farewell. *John Earls*

9

PENNIE SMITH ETHAN RUSSELL

Factory Records
COMMUNICATIONS 1978-92
RHINO

Originally released in 2009 as a CD-only tribute to Factory Records owner Tony Wilson, this not inconsiderable 63-track boxset compilation finally makes it to vinyl across eight albums and is accompanied by a 40-page booklet. The occasion is Factory's 40th anniversary and this retrospective comes hot on the heels of its recently released companion box, *Use Hearing Protection 1978-1979*. Across its 16 sides, the usual suspects all line up here, with Joy Division, New Order, Happy Mondays, The Durutti Column, A Certain Ratio and Electronic all contributing tellingly. The label's lesser-profile lights, such as The Distractions, Swamp Children, Stockholm Monsters, Quango Quango and Miaow, add some necessary light and shade with their tracks, obviously enough, far less familiar than their better-known counterparts. *Gary Tipp* **8**

Pulp
HIS 'N' HERS
UMC

Of course, the album most people would cite as their favourite Jarvis-fronted record is the other one. You know, the one with *Common People* on it. Its precursor *His 'N' Hers* inherits the slightly spindly sound which producer Ed Buller had already trailblazed on Suede's debut the year before, and which Pulp later jettisoned in favour of Chris Thomas' muscularity. But *His 'N' Hers* benefits from *Different Class*' overexposure. This handsome double white vinyl reissue surprises with its generous number of classic pop songs (*Do You Remember The First Time?, Babies*) and overlooked beauties such as *Pink Glove* and über-Jarvis album-closer *David's Last Summer* which, with lines like "The whole sound of summer packing its bags and preparing to leave town", demonstrates the durability of the singer's talent. *Ben Wardle* **9**

Jim Sullivan
JIM SULLIVAN/
IF THE EVENING WERE DAWN
LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

A cratedigger's dream, Jim Sullivan disappeared after one album, *U.F.O.* – recorded in 1969 with Wrecking Crew members and reissued last year – and another in 1972. Three years later, he vanished, after leaving his possessions in a New Mexico hotel. That second release now gets an overdue resurrection, and it's a wonderfully arranged collection of folk-rock that recalls Townes Van Zandt's masterful melancholy. While *If The Evening Were Dawn* is an album of previously unreleased 1969 acoustic recordings, whose intimacy and craft further emphasises Sullivan's considerable songwriting skills, especially on standout track *Roll Back The Time*. *Wyndham Wallace* **8**

The Who
LIVE AT THE ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL
EARMUSIC

Live At Leeds may be more concise, but if you want to hear The 'Orrible 'Oo in all their blitzkrieg glory, then this festival set six months later isn't far behind. By the time the band arrived onstage at 2am, the crowd needed a Who-assisted kick up the arse. "Smile ya buggers! Pretend it's Christmas!" taunts Pete Townshend. *Heaven And Hell* is an immediate call to arms, as is a beefed-up *I Can't Explain* and blistering Mose Allison cover *Young Man Blues*. The meat, though, is a rollicking take on *Tommy* in all its cod-spiritual glory, plus a career through *Substitute*, a rock 'n' roll medley, and a seven-minute *My Generation* showcasing Pete's guitar heroics and John Entwistle's muscular bass playing. The best live rock band of all time at their peak? We're not ruling it out. *Steve Harnell* **9**

Irmin Schmidt
VILLA WUNDERBAR
SPOON

After an initial CD-only release in 2013, the Can founder's massive retrospective compilation album is now out on vinyl for the first time. This is great news for fans of his beyond-legendary krautrock outfit, who will note the inclusion of two remixes of Can tracks (*Alice* and *Last Night Sleep*), while aficionados of Schmidt's solo work will appreciate tracks such as *Fledermenschen*, *Kick On The Floods* and *Bohemian Step*. Before founding Can, Schmidt studied under Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage, and this classical training is pre-eminent in his soundtrack work for films and television (with 19 of his OST pieces curated by director Wim Wenders). This clear-vinyl version has been updated to now include music from *5 Klavierstücke*, Schmidt's well-received album of spontaneously recorded piano pieces released just last year. *Gary Tipp* **8**

James Brown
LIVE AT HOME WITH HIS BAD SELF
REPUBLIC/UMC

James Brown's plans to celebrate a return to his Augusta, Georgia, roots with a live album release of this October 1969 homecoming show were rather derailed by the small matter of his stellar backing band breaking up soon afterwards. This, then, is the first time the concert has been heard in full and serves as a fine memorial to a crack outfit. The band are given the space to shine on instrumentals including a strikingly funky cover of Blood, Sweat And Tears' *Spinning Wheel* and Hammond-organ-driven *Lowdown Popcorn*, while the Godfather of Soul underlines his balladeering chops on *If I Ruled The World* and *Try Me*. But it's the show-stealing frantic tears through *I Got The Feelin'*, *Give It Up Or Turnit A Loose* and *I Can't Stand Myself* that will leave you gasping for breath. *Steve Harnell* **8**

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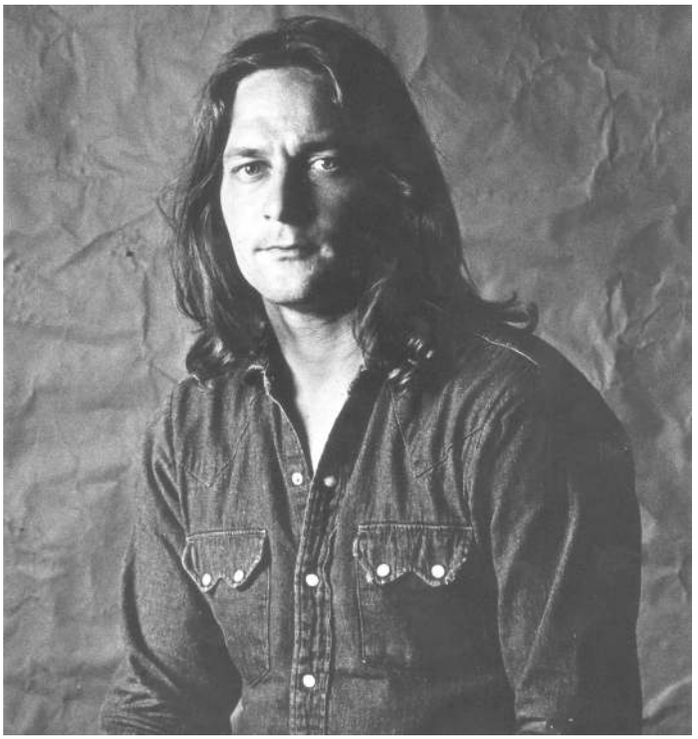


Gene Clark

NO OTHER

4AD

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

Perhaps it was his reputation as an unreliable live performer, the unrepresentative faux-1920s cover art, or interior photos of Gene Clark glammed up in a blouse that led to the commercial failure of *No Other*. As Clark pinballed between Byrds reunions and his commercially underperforming solo career, *No Other* seemed like a last throw of the dice. Although now rightly viewed as a cult classic, after it flopped in 1974, Clark never recovered from the hammer blow to his confidence. Gene spent $100,000 on making the album – Asylum Records boss David Geffen hit the roof – yet you can hear every cent on these lush recordings. Re-released to mark what would have been Clark's 75th birthday, a limited edition vinyl boxset rounds up outtakes from this extraordinary project. However, the straight eight-song album remastered at Abbey Road is faultless. The rollicking country-rock-meets-gospel opener *Life's Greatest Fool* sets the scene, Clark's downbeat self-deprecation set amid jewel-like arrangements. Lee Sklar's bassline threads beautifully through the 'cosmic Americana' of *Silver Raven* and the title track boasts the same maximalist production that Dennis Wilson employed on *Pacific Ocean Blue*. *Strength Of Strings* is almost overwhelming in its emotional intensity and Gene's ode to Gram Parsons *From A Silver Phial* equally affecting. *Some Misunderstanding* hints at Clark's struggle for sobriety, touching on electronic-textured 'future-music' the much-missed Clark never capitalised on. ***Steve Harnell***

9

R.E.M.

MONSTER (25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

CRAFT RECORDINGS

R.E.M. made worse albums after *Monster*, but they didn't release anything as peculiar. Peter Buck claims in the sleevenotes that R.E.M. "wanted to get away from who we were", and suddenly making a glam/grunge hybrid definitely qualified. Sometimes glorious, sometimes messy, *Monster* is never what you'd expect. Its punkier songs mostly worked, with *Star 69* brilliantly nihilistic; opening pair *What's The Frequency, Kenneth?* and *Crush With Eyeliner* are lavished in pulsing tremolo. Oddly, it's when *Monster* reverts to heartfelt emotion that it comes unstuck. *Let Me In*, Michael Stipe's tribute to his friend Kurt Cobain, is an atonal blur. Producer Scott Litt appears to have spent the past 25 years blaming himself for some of *Monster*'s faults and has persuaded the band to let him remix the whole record. Available in a double album with the original, Litt's new mix really does improve *Monster*. True, some of the good songs should have been left alone, as *Star 69* is now caricature punk. *But Crush With Eyeliner* is reborn as woozy folk-rock straight from *Lifes Rich Pageant*; *I Don't Sleep, I Dream* is stripped back to its core menace; *Circus Envy* loses its bloated AOR polish to find pop simplicity. Litt can't rescue everything: *Bang And Blame* simply isn't very good. But there's now a very strong album indeed to be had from *Monster,* and what else would you need? While the CD boxset's live album and demos aren't available on vinyl, Litt's thoughtful alternative is definitely the pick of the extras. *John Earls*

8

JOHN DIETRICH KEITH CARTER

Miles Davis

THE LEGENDARY PRESTIGE QUINTET SESSIONS

CRAFT RECORDINGS

Miles' tenure with Prestige has been diced and sliced in innumerable ways over the years. From November 1955 to October '56, his quintet were enormously productive during three recording sessions. The 32 tracks here were previously available in a 2006 CD boxset, but are now augmented by a bonus LP of TV and radio appearances. It's unimpeachable stuff, as Miles and John Coltrane battle for supremacy; the Prestige quadrilogy of *Cookin'*, *Relaxin'*, *Workin'* and *Steamin'* feature some of Davis' best jazz standard cover versions, as well as a flurry of superb originals. Pressed on 180g vinyl and housed in a 20-page hardcover linen-wrapped portfolio-style book featuring in-depth liner notes from jazz historian Bob Blumenthal, this is as close as you get to a definitive statement on the Quintet. ***Steve Harnell*** **9**

Jackson 5

GREATEST HITS

MOTOWN/UMC

The sheer exuberance dominating this first compilation of the Jackson family's hits is, from the moment a finger runs down the piano at *I Want You Back*'s start, almost irresistible. It is, admittedly, a little disconcerting to hear an unbroken male voice sing "I'm gonna teach you all about love, dear," on disco prototype *ABC*, and even more the soprano squeal behind *Sugar Daddy*'s "I'm gonna be your sugar daddy", but the Jacksons were always of another world. Who, meanwhile, can argue with *The Love You Save*'s propulsive percussion or *Never Can Say Goodbye*'s innocent joy, not to mention the way the tempo halves for Tito's moment on *Going Back To Indiana*? This repress of the 1971 collection features 1975's rare Japanese Quad mix, with minor, trainspotter-friendly adjustments to the original mixes. *Wyndham Wallace* **9**

Ben Harper

WELCOME TO THE CRUEL WORLD

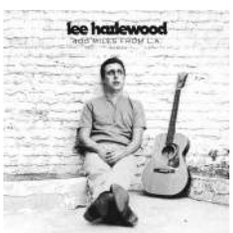
VIRGIN/UMC

In 25 years, Ben Harper's unassuming blend of blues, folk and rock has racked up numerous Grammys over 12 albums and countless collaborations, including with The Blind Boys of Alabama, Dhani Harrison and Joseph Arthur (as Fistful Of Mercy), Charlie Musselwhite and most recently Mavis Staples on this year's excellent *We Get By*. Indeed, collab-happy Harper perhaps obscures the artist himself, who has not released an album under his own name since 2011. After such a gap, listening to his debut, now re-released on double vinyl, is a frustrating experience. Opener, the Jansch-meets-Cooder *The Three Of Us*, is followed by blues-rocker *Whipping Boy*, before pure pop-folk arrives with standout *Waiting On An Angel*. Among the genre hopping, Harper's vocal is strangely anonymous and doesn't quite cement it all. ***Ben Wardle*** **6**

Lee Hazlewood

400 MILES FROM L.A.

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC



An unexpected component of Light In The Attic's Lee Hazlewood archival series, *400 Miles…* compiles recordings unearthed by John Dixon, who later took over Hazlewood's first label, Viv. Taped as demos in the mid 50s, and, in their references to small-town America, reflective of the unsuccessful journeys he undertook from Phoenix to LA to sell them, they're revelatory for his 'addicks'. Though his voice was yet to reach later depths, they're a spellbinding snapshot of a young writer with unusual talent. He's heartbroken on *The Woman I Love*, drenched in reverb on *Fort Worth*, and dusts off a kazoo on entertaining instrumental *The Country Bus Tune*. It's the previously unknown, visceral sketches for debut album *Trouble Is A Lonesome Town*, though, that make this an imperative purchase. *Wyndham Wallace* **8**

Deep Purple

IN CONCERT WITH THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

EARMUSIC

When Deep Purple originally played with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra back in 1969 at the Royal Albert Hall, it was as a sop to organist Jon Lord's classical inclinations. After the runaway success of that record helped to propel them to stardom, 30 years later they restaged their *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*. This time, though, it was with the London Symphony Orchestra, new material and some special guests. The always-brilliant Sam Brown shines on tender ballad *Wait A While* and Ronnie James Dio hams it up for the high-kicking *Love Is All* before the orchestra fully assert themselves on the 50-minute concerto itself. Yes, they close with *Smoke On The Water*, but this is a showcase for Purple's versatility, not just the heavy riffing. Lord's lofty ambitions weren't misplaced, after all. ***Steve Harnell*** **8**

Madonna

MADONNA/LIKE A VIRGIN/TRUE BLUE/ WHO'S THAT GIRL

RHINO

Madonna's first four albums get the clear vinyl treatment, looking far fancier than the yards of ragged charity shop copies. Of course, a full-on reissue campaign would help – and there are rumours that might finally start next year, with whispers of Madonna's first deluxe edition vintage album. Whether that'll materialise, we'll wait and see. Until then, here's a solid stopgap ahead of Madonna's London Palladium residency in January. These four albums are all about the singles, but anyone who wants to argue with hits as indestructible as *Holiday*, *Material Girl* and *Papa Don't Preach* is a clot. *True Blue* is the standout, but *Who's That Girl* is only for completists. No need to repurchase, but they're now the default option for first-time Madonna vinylists. *John Earls* **8**

Worldmags.net

Motörhead
1979 BOXSET
BMG

"It was always Lemmy's demand to give the fans the very best possible." So reads the marketing spiel with this 'biker jacket' encased boxset. And BMG have. You could argue half-speed remastering a pair of 1979 Motörhead albums on 180g vinyl is counter to the amphetamine-fuelled nihillism that inspired the originals, but fans will delight in this lavish tribue to one of rock's most essential acts, who straddled punk and nascent metal. Alongside a pair of previously unreleased live albums and a disc of B-sides and rarities, the goodies include a *Bomber* tour programme, '79 badge, *No Class* single, 40-page music magazine and *Overkill* sheet music. The latter LP, overseen by Stones producer Jimmy Miller, is the pick of the pair here, the ferocious pace of its title track the blueprint for their defining anthem *Ace Of Spades*, a year later. ***Gary Walker*** **9**

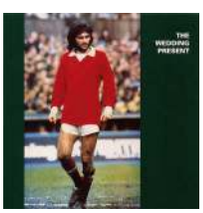
Jonathan Fire*Eater
TREMBLE UNDER BOOM LIGHTS
THIRD MAN RECORDS

When Jonathan Fire*Eater's *Tremble Under Boom Lights* first surfaced in 1996, it was a lean, mean five-track EP. Now, made available on vinyl for the first time in over 20 years via Third Man Records, it has been artfully reincarnated with five extra tracks and a collection of poetry (*The Plural Atmosphere*) from the band's late frontman Stewart Lupton. It was a case of what might have been for Jonathan Fire*Eater, with opener *The Search For Cherry Red* a ferocious, head-dizzying example of what the band were capable of – while bonus track, the previously unheard *In The Head* was the last song the band recorded. Critical acclaim was easy to attain for Jonathan Fire*Eater, commercial success harder to muster. After they disbanded, various members went on to form US indie act The Walkmen. *Gary Tipp* **8**

Julia Kent
GREEN AND GREY
THE LEAF LABEL

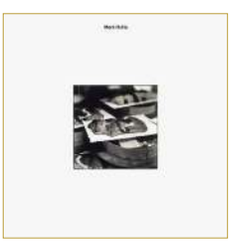
New York-based cellist Julia Kent's much-praised second album, *Green And Grey* (2011), is now, thankfully, available on vinyl for the first time. Across two discs, on green and grey coloured vinyl (of course), this considerably expanded edition also features the preceding *Last Day In July* EP (2010) and two previously unreleased tracks. Kent's ability as a composer of mesmerising neo-classical soundscapes is considerable, and *Green And Grey* is a delicately mournful exploration of the uneasy balance between the man-made world and the organic (green is for grass, grey is for concrete). The results are truly beautiful and utterly immersive, as the former Antony & The Johnsons member uses the cello's various textures (which she loops and layers) alongside a number of field recordings and subtle electronics to create a highly personal landscape. ***Gary Tipp*** **9**

The Wedding Present
GEORGE BEST/TOMMY
PIAS



With main man David Gedge delivering lovelorn tales of ailing romances with an undiluted Leeds accent and a bleak sense of humour, The Wedding Present inevitably invited comparisons to The Smiths. Like a grittier Morrissey, he lamented on *My Favourite Dress* that "I can't still be drunk at five/ Oh, I guess I surely can", before poetically pouring out his agony: "Slowly your beauty is eaten away/ By the scent of someone else/ In the blanket where we lay". Limited recording budgets inflicted a lo-fi shabbiness on both 1987's debut *George Best* and the early singles compiled on 1988's *Tommy*, but there's no question that both helped to shape the sound of British indie for years. *Wyndham Wallace* **8**

Mark Hollis
MARK HOLLIS
UMC



Failing to receive a vinyl release when first issued in January 1998, the late Talk Talk singer's first and only solo album was eventually granted an indifferent German pressing in 2003. Copies of this unsatisfactory version are currently available on Discogs starting at £307. Those of us living in the real, as opposed to, ahem, another world, will consequently be rejoicing at Universal's decision to put *Mark Hollis* into a 12" sleeve. Interviewed at the time for *Wired* (the last time the reluctant star ever agreed to such a thing), Hollis stated: "I just wanted to work on a much more minimal scale… taking things back to the most basic level… where it's the actual intimacy that is its strength". For anyone who appreciates the enduring genius of *Spirit Of Eden* and *Laughing Stock*, this beautiful low-key powerhouse is an essential purchase. ***Ben Wardle*** **9**

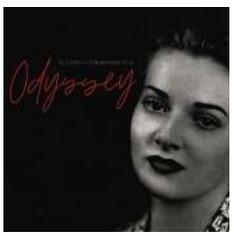
Gary Numan
LIVE AT SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
EAGLE RECORDS

The latest in a long line of Gary Numan live albums is, sadly, no great shakes. The show itself took place just as Numan was veering away from his previous synth-pop/electronic persona and riding headlong into his (current) industrial soundscape. The tour promoted his '97 *Exile* LP and a great chunk of the music here is taken from that record. The really big synth classics are also here (of course), but they are given a little bit more oomph courtesy of the talented musicians on show – with new arrangements, rocking guitar riffs and tribal drums. Unfortunately, this recording is let down by muffled vocals. For your patronage, you also get a double-CD version thrown in, which is perfect for the car, but unless you're a die-hard Numanoid, the fact that you can't hear the singer properly is probably a deal breaker. *Alex Duce* **6**

Ivor Raymonde

IVOR RAYMONDE – ODYSSEY: THE SOUND OF IVOR RAYMONDE VOL II

BELLA UNION



Most readers will know Ivor as the father of young Simon of this parish and Bella Union supremo. He released a compilation of his dad's work last year, and now hot off its elegant heels comes Volume Two. Where first volume, *Paradise,* cast an all-encompassing net over Raymonde's whole career, these 25 tracks are culled predominantly from the 1960s. All are of course beautifully arranged and some will be familiar (The Walker Brothers' *Where's The Girl*; Alan Price Set's *Simon Smith And The Amazing Dancing Bear*) but many are rare finds, like Robert Fripp outfit Giles, Giles and Fripp, Christopher Colt's *Girl In The Mirror* and The Eyes of Blue's Raymonde-penned B-side *Don't Ask Me To Mend Your Broken Heart.* Key discovery is the rare 'banger', as Raymonde Jnr puts it, The Martells' *Time To Say Goodnight.* ***Ben Wardle*** **8**

Sparks

PAST TENSE: THE BEST OF/GRATUITOUS SAX AND SENSELESS VIOLINS

BMG

The subject of a forthcoming documentary by Edgar Wright and having written new Adam Driver/Marion Cotillard musical *Annette,* Sparks capitalise on the exposure with a 3LP Best Of. There are only 27 songs, compared to the CD edition's exhaustive 58 tracks, but it's a well-chosen entry to the Maels' cabaret of wonder. More troublesome is a reissue of one of Sparks' best albums, *Gratuitous Sax And Senseless Violins,* for its 25th anniversary. It's marked with some superb demos and remixes but, depressingly, BMG don't offer any on vinyl. The original album is a landmark in Sparks' career, a wonderful synth-pop kiss-off to Britpop that blasted the Maels back into the Top 40. *John Earls* **7**

Everything But The Girl

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

WALKING WOUNDED

BUZZING FLY

The context of this 1996 album is familiar but worth retelling. When the indie-folk duo released their final album for Warner, *Amplified Heart,* nobody expected LP number nine to set the world on fire. But when MC Todd Terry remixed *Missing,* the combination of Tracey Thorn's plaintive vocal and a house beat proved irresistible. Ben Watt was already listening to drum and bass and envisioned a "mix of high-tuned propulsive drums, late-night samples and low sub bass [which] just seemed to leave a big plangent hole in the middle". Tracey had already proved she could fill that hole on Massive Attack's *Protection,* and the duo's excitement at this fresh approach inspired some of their most enduring songs. It's a seamless classic, available on vinyl for the first time. ***Ben Wardle*** **9**

Various Artists

STAX REISSUES

CRAFT RECORDINGS

As part of the year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of Stax's 'Soul Explosion', reissue wizards Craft Recordings have given five gems from the archives the 180g reissue treatment. Booker T & The M.G's' *Melting Pot* is an historic document in its own right – and the expansive grooves of this last LP of the original line-up see them going out in style. Likewise, the return of the Bar-Kays with 1969's *Gotta Groove* is a moment to treasure after the tragedy of losing Otis Redding two years earlier. Johnnie Taylor's *Who's Making Love* packs plenty of bedroom-ready raunch, while David Porter's 1971 concept LP *Victim Of The Joke?* showcases the label's diversity. Delaney & Bonnie's rootsy white soul *Home* proves just why they were so fêted by Brit-rock royalty including Clapton and Harrison. *Steve Harnell* **8**

N.E.R.D

IN SEARCH OF...

UMC

Back in 2001, pre-*Happy* Pharrell Williams and partner Chad Hugo, aka The Neptunes, were ubiquitous, producing and remixing everyone from Britney to Limp Bizkit. Teaming up with childhood friend Shay Haley and calling themselves No One Ever Really Dies, they released this, their debut in 2001 but despite, or perhaps because of, The Neptunes' high profile, it bombed. Undeterred, they went back to the studio and re-recorded the whole thing with rock outfit Spymob. US critics panned it for "despicable addition of rap-metal drumming and distorted guitar posturing". The album contains some of Pharrell's most enduring songs sung in his distinctive and underrated alt-pop voice. Occasionally, the casual sexism of the kind which informed *Blurred Lines* gets in the way but overall, this new four-disc set is Pharrell at his very best. ***Ben Wardle*** **7**

The Fall

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

HEX ENDUCTION HOUR

CHERRY RED

The Fall's remarkable longevity meant they scaled more creative peaks than most bands have haircuts. 1982's *Hex Enduction Hour* is one such peak. Recorded in Reykjavik and Hitchin (naturally) during a prolific period for the band, Mark E Smith described the album as a stand against the music scene of the day, a reaction to "bland bastards like Elvis Costello and Spandau Ballet". True to his word, *Through The Barricades* this is not. With the classic two-drummer line-up in place, The Fall's sonic touchstones for their abrasive fourth album were Can, Captain Beefheart and the Velvets, and Smith's inspired utterings are propulsed by a glorious wall of scratchy guitar and relentlessly repetetive percussion. Opener *The Classical* is a salvo of intent like no other, while *Hip Priest* is as personal a song as Smith ever wrote. A work of genius. *Gary Tipp* **9**

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Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

GHOSTEEN
GHOSTEEN LTD

Nick Cave emerges with one of his most powerful and extraordinary albums, a meditation on grief, morality and wonder. **Jonathan Wright** celebrates the work of a master songwriter

TRACKLIST

PART ONE
1 Spinning Song
2 Bright Horses
3 Waiting For You
4 Night Raid
5 Sun Forest
6 Galleon Ship
7 Ghosteen Speaks
8 Leviathan

PART TWO
1 Ghosteen
2 Fireflies
3 Hollywood

On *Fireflies*, sequenced as the penultimate track on *Ghosteen*, Nick Cave goes, not for the first time on an extraordinary LP, to the heart of the matter. "We are here and you are where you are," Cave speak-sings. It's a line that's impossible to hear without immediately thinking back to the tragedy of the accidental death of Cave's teenage son, Arthur.

Faced with such a devastating event, many would have hidden. Cave has done the opposite. Having spent long years building a persona that was a mix of brimstone preacher, sinister carny and lovelorn troubadour, the latter-day Cave is a man who, via his Red Hand Files website, says: "You can ask me anything," and whose most recent shows have brought the same premise into a concert setting. As to why he's done this, the need for connection appears paramount. "We all needed to draw ourselves back to a state of wonder," Cave has said of his family's grief. "My way was to write myself there."

In this context, one way to understand *Ghosteen*'s structure – a double LP, the songs on the first album are "children", on the second "parents", Cave has stated – is to see the first disc as Cave reaching for this state of wonder. The images on these songs are often as fantastical as the album's bucolic-kitsch cover. In *Sun Forest*, children spiral upwards, the steeds of *Bright Horses* burn with intensity, while *Galleon Ships* "circle around the morning sun".

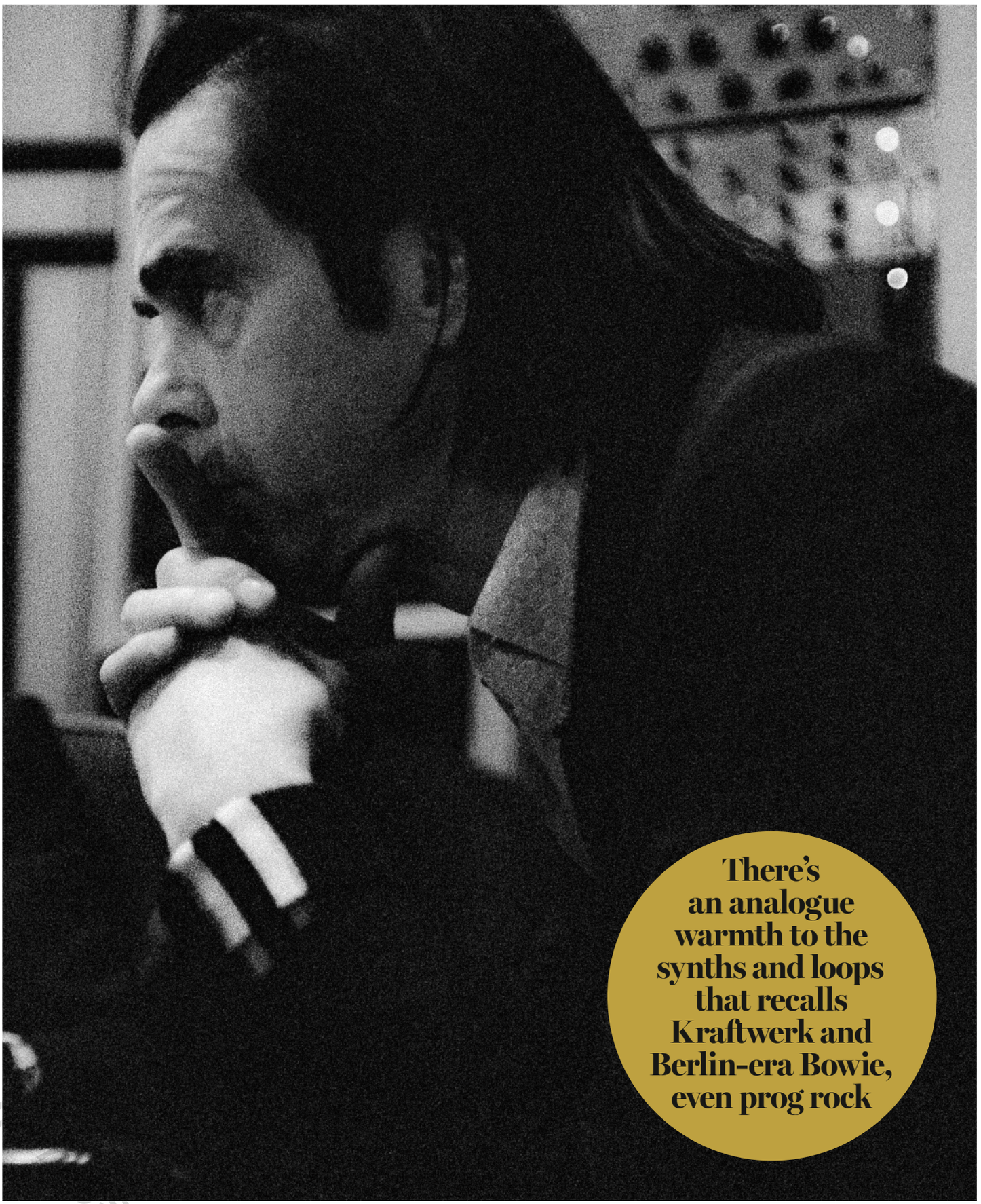
The songs' arrangements, with their use of swirling electronics, recall *Skeleton Tree*. And yet Cave and his trusted lieutenant Warren Ellis aren't repeating themselves. If *Skeleton Tree* was as stark as the title suggests, there's now an analogue warmth to the synths and loops that recalls Kraftwerk and Berlin-era Bowie, even prog rock.

All of which might be too much if it weren't for Cave sometimes breaking the fourth wall, undercutting himself. Those *Bright Horses*, he declares at one point, "are just horses". Wonder, perhaps, is something you can touch fleetingly, but not without the workaday world eventually intruding.

As for the three songs that conclude the album, the parents, these seem more concerned with the darkest moments of grief. On *Ghosteen*, "Baby Bear he has gone." For *Hollywood*, Cave mixes up a road-movie narrative with the story of Kisa Gotami, a woman who went to see the Buddha after losing her child.

It's the last song, but it's tempting to see it as the key to what's gone before, the linking point between the grief and the wonder. Further, while recurring characters from Cave's work, Elvis and Jesus, make appearances on *Ghosteen*. It's a song that represents how there's a sense throughout of Cave looking for new stories, new approaches. Why? Maybe because his songwriting tropes and those familiar characters are no longer adequate to grappling with what's happened.

With all your heart, you wish circumstances were such that it didn't have to be this way, and yet Cave's insistence on reaching for the wonder is, in itself, wondrous. 9



There's an analogue warmth to the synths and loops that recalls Kraftwerk and Berlin-era Bowie, even prog rock

MATT THORNE

Wor...s.net

The Who

WHO

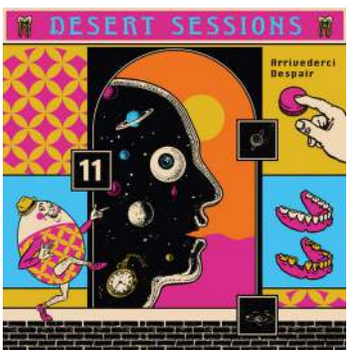
POLYDOR

Claims of "The Who's last album" have been made before, but there really is an air of finality about Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend's first record since 2006's unlovely *Endless Wire*. The reassuring news is *WHO* would be a more fitting epitaph than that album. Although Townshend has stressed he wanted to "stay away from nostalgia", *WHO*'s standout tracks are self-referential. The opening *All This Music Must Fade* is their best pop song since *Who Are You*, Daltrey knowingly singing how nobody is interested in new Who songs before it crashes to a halt as he mutters, "Oh, who gives a fuck?" *Rockin' In Rage* is more heartfelt. Daltrey continues the deeper rumble showcased on last year's undervalued solo album *As Long As I Have You* in a performance that rages, sure, but there's wisdom and redemption in his voice, too. The subtler moments also work well: *Beads On One String*'s mysticism and the Simon Townshend-penned love song *Break The News* are sweet and simple outbreaks of calm. At the other end of the scale, *Ball And Chain* – previewed at this summer's Wembley Stadium show – works better than you suspect a Who rant about Guantanamo Bay might. So there's half a great album here. The other six songs are passable, mostly mid-tempo meanderings. To paraphrase *All This Music Must Fade*, nobody needs them, especially forced gonzo outburst *I Don't Wanna Get Wise*. Would anyone rave about *WHO* if it were by a new band? Doubtful. But there are enough wisps of old devilment to suggest that, all these years on, The Who aren't a safe proposition yet either. ***John Earls*** **7**

Various Artists

DESERT SESSIONS 11&12

MATADOR



What began as a casual writing retreat for serial collaborative ringmaster Josh Homme in 1997 reaches volume 12 16 years after the previous release. Also known respectively as *Arrivederci Despair* and *Tightwads & Nitwits & Critics & Heel,* the latest double entry features perhaps the most surprising and diverse cast yet. An eight-song set recorded in a six-day blast at Rancho de la Luna studios, the air is perpetually loose, contributors encouraged both to let it all hang out and serve the songs. Billy Gibbons takes the lead vocal on understated opener *Move Together. If You Run* begins in folky quietude, Libby Grace's gently lulling voice aided by a fingerpicked acoustic guitar before succumbing to Homme's soloing; Royal Blood's Mike Kerr is at the helm of sub-two-minute *Crucifire*, which sounds exactly as you'd expect a collision between the Brighton two-piece and Homme to. Far less conventional is the bizarre bad joke *Chic Tweetz*, the mysterious Töörnst Hülpft aping around with Matt Berry over a glam backing ("Send me some nude pics/ Or let's make naughty flix/ Just cram me in your mix/ I got trix"). *Something You Can't See* is an airy Tame Impala-esque highlight, with Scissor Sisters' Jake Shears floating dreamily above proceedings, while on closer *Easier Said Than Done* Homme sounds not unlike *Blackstar*-era Bowie, railing at "Tightwads & nitwits and critics and heels/ Correcting your grammar for fun". Only just passing the 30-minute mark, it's not the strongest, but at times the strangest edition of this venerable series. *Gary Walker* **7**

RICK GUEST ANDREAS NEUMANN

Michael Kiwanuka
KIWANUKA
POLYDOR

The release of Kiwanuka's second album in 2016 pre-dated the absurdist drama that life has become since. *Love & Hate* indeed. News for the Muswell Hill troubadour since then, however, has been only love: a number one album, critical acclaim and Netflix soundtrack ubiquity. Difficult third album, then? While *Kiwanuka* may not contain festival anthems like *Black Man In A White World* or *One More Night*, it works better as a complete piece. Danger Mouse and Inflo, at the production helm again, bring the cinematic scope of the former's *Lux Prima* project. There's also a rawer band feel: *Rolling* rocks with a bassline straight from Jack Bruce; *You Ain't The Problem* captures the atmosphere of Minnie Riperton's *Les Fleur*. Throughout, the sound is deeply analogue; a perfect setting for Kiwanuka's plaintive musings on the human condition. ***Ben Wardle*** **8**

Jeff Lynne's ELO
FROM OUT OF NOWHERE
COLUMBIA

Belying its title, Jeff Lynne's 14th studio album finds him in familiar territory. Buoyed by the success of 2015's *Alone In The Universe* under the reactivated ELO moniker, those trademark four-to-the-bar drums, layered guitars and orchestral flourishes remain resolutely in place on a record that does everything you'd expect a Jeff Lynne record to. While the mid-paced likes of *Help Yourself* feel like a rather tired retread of his past, 80s-influenced ballad *All My Love* is undeniably pretty, likewise the George Harrison-esque grace of *Losing You*. There's more thump to the percussive *Down Came The Rain*, while *One More Time* is a guileless update of ELO stomper *Roll Over Beethoven*. The old-time 50s waltz of *Goin' Out Of Me*, underlines the fact this is an album that's unapologetically of its time. *Steve Harnell* **6**

FKA Twigs
MAGDALENE
YOUNG TURKS

If FKA Twigs' second album seems fragmented, it was recorded when she felt broken, both emotionally and physically. What *Magdalene* does, though, is put those pieces back together. It is, of course, challenging, but, in its translucent emotional articulacy and intricate production, it often brings to mind Björk's majestic *Vespertine*. In fact, this is the sound of Tahliah Barnett declaring these days, "A woman's time to embrace/ She must put herself first", and these lines from the title track define the entire album. *Thousand Eyes* blends kettle drums, muffled electronic chords and shimmering choral vocals, and her voice on *Sad Day* and torch song *Daybed* is painfully intimate. On *Cellophane*, her voice scales impossible heights, while *Home With You* and *Mirrored Heart*, whose piano echoes Radiohead, overflow with impassioned drama. ***Wyndham Wallace*** **8**

Leonard Cohen
THANKS FOR THE DANCE
SONY

Bequeathed his father's final recordings, Adam Cohen gathered a stellar cast – including Beck, Daniel Lanois, Dustin O'Halloran and, naturally, Jennifer Warnes – to guide them towards completion. His pa's energy rarely registers: on *Listen To The Hummingbird*, his mesmerising voice strokes one's cheek alongside a quiet accompaniment of echoing piano and rippling effects, and *It's Torn* is like Lee Hazlewood whispering, while *Puppets* is a brooding, profoundly moving, stark drama, which examines the manner in which we're sometimes forced to act immorally on behalf of others. Fortunately *The Hills*, with its softly sung choir, is more expansive, while he almost sings on the Louisiana funereal title track, before indulging his talent for seduction one last time on *The Night Of* Santiago: "Her nipples rose like bread." *Wyndham Wallace* **8**

Bonnie "Prince" Billy
I MADE A PLACE
DOMINO

The first Bonnie "Prince" Billy album of full originals in just over eight years sees Will Oldham backed by a Louisville band that includes guitarist Nathan Salsburg, drummer Mike Hyman and singer-songwriter Joan Shelley. The album was inspired by an extended stay in Hawaii, where he and his wife took up artist-in-residency positions. The warm air and lush surroundings seem to have done the restless performer a world of good, and while the songs still possess a familiar under-the-surface darkness, large chinks of light shine ebulliently through. There is a directness of approach to *I Made A Place* that makes it an anxiety-free and calm, joyful listen. Oldham's lyrics are as warmly humane and whip-smart as ever, particularly on opener *New Memory Box* and the countrified *Look Backwards On Your Future, Look Forward To Your Past*. ***Gary Tipp*** **8**

Stereophonics
KIND
PARLOPHONE

It looked like Stereophonics were shaking things up when they made *Kind* in just 11 days, with George Drakoulias their first new producer since 2005. Previous albums *Keep The Village Alive* and *Scream Above The Sounds* had repositioned the band back to the lyrical rock of their early days, so quite what's gone wrong on *Kind* is a mystery. There are hints of how Drakoulias has helped: *Bust This Town* has a new supple rhythm, while *Don't Let The Devil Take Another Day* is a confident epic. But the rest is Stereophonics cruising on autopilot: slow, ponderous ballads trying much too hard for stadium status, lacking Kelly Jones' usual storytelling eye for detail. Comfortably their worst album since previous nadir You *Gotta Go There To Come Back*, you can only hope that *Kind* is some kind of temporary blip. *John Earls* **5**

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Sufjan Stevens/ Timo Andres

THE DECALOGUE OST

ASTHMATIC KITTY

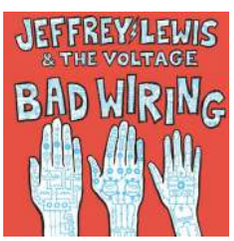
It was back in 2015 when Sufjan Stevens released his last song collection, *Carrie & Lowell*, but for all the long wait for a new LP he's hardly been a slouch. Projects such as the *Planetarium* LP (2017), a collaborative effort on cosmic themes that also featured The National's Bryce Dessner and was released with little prior fanfare, and soundtrack work have suggested a man hiding in plain sight rather than resting up. *The Decalogue*, a score written for choreographer Justin Peck of the New York City Ballet and performed in 2017 (one of the duo's five collaborations to date), fits with this pattern. Played here by composer-pianist Timo Andres, it's also achingly beautiful, a sequence of contemporary-classical pieces that's austere yet imbued with a popular songwriter's gift for melody. *Jonathan Wright*

8

Jeffrey Lewis & The Voltage

BAD WIRING

MOSHI MOSHI



Mixing lo-fi, punk and anti-folk, the basic sound of Jeffrey Lewis albums rarely changes. And yet, because John Peel's famous description of The Fall: "They are always different; they are always the same," applies equally to Lewis, this isn't a fault but a virtue. There's always something about even the slightest Lewis record to make you return to it. As for his strongest offerings, and *Bad Wiring* falls into that category, they reward repeated listening. Recorded in Nashville with Roger Moutenot (most famous for his work on Yo La Tengo's LPs), it's all assured enough for a track such as *In Certain Orders* to sound like the missing link between Pavement and The Cult, without ever sacrificing Lewis's trademark rickety charm and lyrical wit. *Jonathan Wright*

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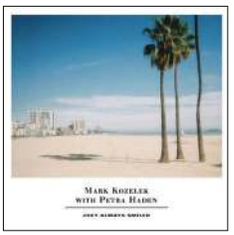
Mark Kozelek With Petra Haden

JOEY ALWAYS SMILED

CALDO VERDE



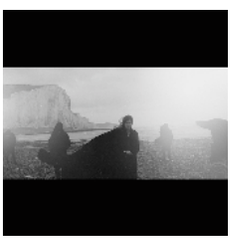
One way to regard the recent career of Mark Kozelek of Sun Kil Moon fame is as a sustained effort to capture the moment in speak-song. Even aficionados would probably concede that recent releases have been patchy. The problem has been that Kozelek's approach is more successful, as with *Benji* (2014), when his focus is narrow, when the universal grows from the specific. And lately much of his songwriting has seen him looking outwards. In contrast, *Joey Always Smiled*, with its tales of childhood, family and close friends, has an intimacy that's almost painfully raw. Violinist and singer Petra Haden proves a sympathetic co-musician, and an unexpected cover of Huey Lewis' *The Power Of Love* is beautifully delicate. *Ben Wardle*

8

Dog In The Snow

VANISHING LANDS

BELLA UNION



On her debut release for the Bella Union label, the prodigiously talented Helen Ganya Brown (also known as Dog In The Snow) slips further into a world of monochrome songs that shift from introspective tenderness to soaring intensity. Similar to an artist like Chelsea Wolfe, Brown has the priceless ability to move between deeply immersive and atmospheric explorations into terrain where her voice results in stirring and explosive charges. *Vanishing Lands* reflects Brown's deep love of cinema and this record is notable for the way it unfurls into deeply textural yet subtle waves. *Icaria* is a track that is as much industrial techno nightclub in tone as it is more typical singer-songwriter ground. It's this multifaceted expression of tone, mood and pace that Brown has at her disposal that makes this delightful outing the rewarding record it is. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

7

WHAT'S ON IN THE SHOP

WAX AND BEANS

BURY

Adventures Of Salvador

WELCOME TO OUR VILLAGE

GERMAN SHEPHERD RECORDS

When we first opened the shop in June 2019, Nigel from the band was the first person from the local scene to bring us some of their vinyl to sell. Adventures of Salvador are a post-punk band, local to Bury, and we've been spinning it in the shop for a couple of months now. We love it, and it also has had tonnes of support from the community.

Babybird

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

RW/FF RECORDINGS

Everyone over the age of 30 will remember Babybird's smash hit from the 90s. This new LP from Stephen Jones gets a play every couple of days, and you can hear how seasoned a writer and performer he's become. Blues, lo-fi guitars and beautiful piano pieces all work so well with Jones' voice.

Talk Talk

THE COLOUR OF SPRING

EMI

This is always on in the shop, and no-one has ever complained. In fact, people that are new to Talk Talk always ask what's spinning. It seems we opened the shop in great time, as the reissues courtesy of Warner have been flying out of the door all summer. An absolute classic.

Girl Ray
GIRL
MOSHI MOSHI

Pop has always been a crucial ingredient to the output of Girl Ray, even in their previous more lo-fi and indie-leaning incarnation, there was still an unshakable sparkle of melody that ran through it all. Now, with Ariana Grande acknowledged as a chief influence, pop is no longer considered a supplementary strand, but much more of a vital ingredient that the band have fully embraced. This album is a slick, smooth, heavily produced glossy piece of unabashed and unashamed chart music. The opening title track sways and croons along with an almost R&B-esque flavour, and this sets the tone for a record full of glistening synth lines, disco strutting guitar parts, streamlined vocals, endless hooks and melodies that gleam. It's a brave transition that they have not only made seamlessly well, but one that feels as slick as their new-found sound. *Daniel Dylan Wray* **7**

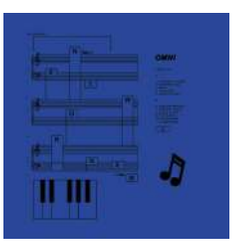
Sudan Archives
ATHENA
STONES THROW RECORDS

The staccato and mildly discordant strings on *Athena* opener *Did You Know?* suggest that LA-based songwriter and violinist Sudan Archives' approach to contemporary R&B isn't quite like other artists'. It's an impression only heightened when she starts singing. "I realised I lost my mind," she says, the opening gambit in a break-up song of haunting power. Much of the rest of the LP follows a similar pattern. Which is to say *Athena* combines the lushness of commercial pop with an indie-electronica edginess, and moments of striking lyrical frankness centred primarily on relationships and family. At times, she heads too far towards the mainstream, losing too much of the skeletal quality of her earlier EPs, but this is still a debut that announces the arrival in earnest of a singular talent. *Jonathan Wright* **7**

Vetiver
UP ON HIGH
LOOSE MUSIC

Had Vetiver's main man Andy Cabic been born in earlier times, he'd have been hanging out in Laurel Canyon, playing acoustic guitar and trying his best to impress Joni Mitchell along with the rest of the self-reflective singer-songwriters. But no such luck. Instead, he's applying his many talents to compiling Light In The Attic's recent Japanese city pop compilation, as well as helming his long-running band's seventh album, *Up On High*. Written on an acoustic guitar, it's a warm collection of indie-folk songs that hark back to 2006's much-loved *To Find Me Gone*. It's not that his West Coast outfit has ever strayed too far from this path across subsequent releases, but *Up On High* just has that feel of a much closer relative. Highlights include the jangly R.E.M. homage *Swaying*, along with the intimately tender *Wanted, Never Asked* and *Filigree*. *Gary Tipp* **8**

Omni
NETWORKER
SUB POP



Made up of former members of Deerhunter (Frankie Broyles) and Carnivores (Philip Frobos, Billy Mitchell), Omni initially peered over their shoulders back to the early 80s for inspiration. However, for their third album, and first on Sub Pop, Atlanta's archest post-punk outfit have had a rethink. Gone are the Josef K/ Wire homages of their previous two releases, as a new less abrasive sound is ushered in. Sonically, this has meant a serious rounding off of the band's scrappy DIY edges, and while this smoothing-out process has, inevitably, made their wry arty-pop less herky jerky, *Networker* is unquestionably the band's most polished and confident album yet. Tracks such as *Skeleton Key* and *Courtesy Call* demonstrate that the band's songwriting smarts are intact and that energy levels remain as high as ever. *Gary Tipp* **8**

SCOTT ROBERT RITCHIE

MY NEW ALBUM

RINGO STARR

"My producer Jack Douglas asked if I ever heard *The Bermuda Tapes*, John's demos from that time. The idea that John was talking about me in that time before he died, well, I'm an emotional person. And I just loved this song. I sang it the best that I could. I do well up when I think of John this deeply. And I've done my best. We've done our best. The other good thing is that I really wanted Paul to play on it, and he said yes. Paul came over and he played bass and sings a little bit on this with me. So John's on it in a way. I'm on it and Paul's on it. This is just what I wanted. And the strings that Jack arranged for this track, if you really listen, they do one line from *Here Comes The Sun*. So in a way, it's the four of us."

Ringo Starr
WHAT'S MY NAME
UMC

Beatles fans will no doubt gravitate towards this after hearing news that Ringo and Paul McCartney have finally completed John Lennon's *Grow Old With Me* following an aborted attempt during their 'Threetles' phase with George Harrison. It's actually one of the weaker efforts on Ringo's 20th studio LP and never fully catches light. Elsewhere, Starr's familiar peace and love vibes proliferate, but there's the odd curveball. Fancy hearing Eagle Joe Walsh rap about Facebook? It's here on *Gotta Get Up To Get Down*. Ringo also revisits early Beatles cover *Money,* but twists his contributions through a vocoder. Ebullient rockers *Magic* and *Better Days* impress, the anthemic *Send Love Spread Peace* is a decent lighter-waver and the Colin Hay-penned title track will surely end up an All-Starr Band live favourite. *Steve Harnell* **7**

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Warmduscher
TAINTED LUNCH
THE LEAF LABEL

After 2018's riotous trip through *Whale City*, the ragtag ensemble that is Warmduscher (featuring members of Fat White Family, Paranoid London and Childhood) return for a *Tainted Lunch*. Much like the previous release, there is a scuzzy blend of garage rock, funk, sleaze, disco and a general vibe of experiencing something depraved taking place behind doors at an after-hours, anything-goes club. Iggy Pop and Kool Keith are along for the ride as guests, but it's the band's own seamless knack for locked-in groove that provides the album's finest moments. *Midnight Dipper* struts and swaggers, *Disco Peanuts* glitzes and glides, while *The Chimp* explodes into a frenzied hysteria. Warmduscher are a band clearly having a lot of fun together, rollicking around in their own delectable filth, and it's a joy to behold. **8**
Daniel Dylan Wray

The Leaf Library
THE WORLD IS A BELL
WHERE IT'S AT IS WHERE YOU ARE

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

Advocates of early-90s shoegaze and post-rock have a new favourite band. The Leaf Library's second album builds on the ambitions of 2015's *Daylight Versions*, but the approach is more considered. Opener *In Doors And Out Through Windows* matches fragile instrumental melodies with Kate Gibson and Melinda Bronstein's Stereolab-style muted harmonies in the same winding fashion as cult 4AD act Insides, while *Hissing Waves* turns to Bark Psychosis' *Hex* for inspiration. There are drone experiments, too, such as the lightly rumbling *Larches Eat Moths*, alongside bursts of jagged noise, like *Bodies Carried Off By Bees* and 20-minute closer *Paper Boats On Black Ink Lake*. But it's the slow-burning *Patience*, with its hushed voices, lilting indie guitars and subtle brass arrangements, that shows this fine band at their best. *Wyndham Wallace* **9**

Bradford Cox / Cate Le Bon
MYTHS 004
MEXICAN SUMMER

The fourth release of Mexican Summer's EP project reconnects Deerhunter's Bradford Cox with Cate Le Bon after she produced the band's most recent album. On paper, it's a tantalising link-up between two idiosyncratic artists with a distinct and wonky sense of melody, rhythm and song structure. All of those said components are present here, sometimes harmoniously (*Canto!*) and sometimes discordantly (*What is She Wearing*), and the pair aren't afraid to push things into the weirder corners of their world. It was written and recorded in a week, and the ramshackle nature of it shows through, but it also succeeds in capturing the pair's natural chemistry. It would be fascinating to hear what they could do with more time together. *Daniel Dylan Wray* **7**

Xylouris White
THE SISYPHEANS
DRAG CITY

There are few things in life as satisfying as watching and hearing Jim "the human octopus" White drum. He's an endlessly innovative player, who switches between deft restraint and wild abandon with a faultless grace. In his now long-standing collaboration with Greek lute player Giorgos Xylouris, he has found an ideal home and partner for such playing outside of the Dirty Three. Produced by Fugazi's Guy Picciotto and featuring Xylouris' son on cello, this is one of the quieter releases the band have made. Slow, unravelling grooves and chant-like singing interweave to create an album that grows carefully and thoughtfully, endlessly exploring the space, tension and release between their instruments. For a duo so clearly in tune with one another, they also manage to feel endlessly loose and exploratory here. *Daniel Dylan Wray* **8**

Robyn Hitchcock & Andy Partridge
PLANET ENGLAND EP
APE HOUSE

In the UK at least, the news that Robyn Hitchcock and Andy Partridge have been writing and recording together seems to have snuck out. The first fruits of their collaboration, a four-track EP released as a 10" for vinyl aficionados, is terrific. The duo, in Hitchcock's words, "suffer from the same record collection, especially the 'B's: Barrett, Beatles, Beefheart", and it shows. Melodically, the tracks here nod back to psychedelia, but to fine effect, notably in the sheer swagger of *Turn Me On, Deadman*. As for the title track, with its references to a place, "Warm and dark and self contained/Airing cupboard, weather veined," it adroitly captures the strange mix of confusion and nostalgia currently gripping the nation. More like this please. *Jonathan Wright* **8**

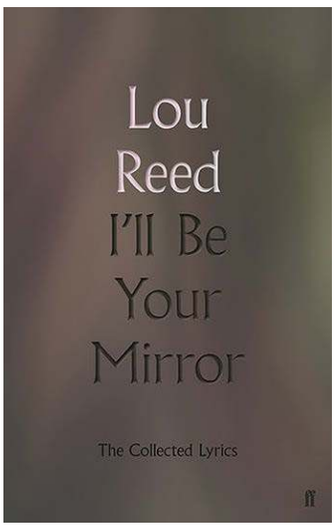
Lucy Dacus
2019
MATADOR

Throughout this most challenging of bad news years, Lucy Dacus has been making sense of events by releasing songs themed around national holidays. The lovely *Fool's Gold* finds Dacus alone drinking the dregs of the New Year's Eve champagne, while a pepped-up cover of Edith Piaf's *La Vie En Rose* marks Valentine's Day and *My Mother & I* uses Mother's Day as a vehicle to explore negative body image. Dacus plays Phil Collins' *In The Air Tonight* (Halloween) straight, while an enjoyable if unremarkable version of *Dancing In The Dark* was released for no other reason than the Boss' (and Lucy's dad's) birthday. This collection won't tear up any trees commercially, but who cares? It's one of the smartest songwriters around celebrating the sheer joy of releasing music on vinyl. Amen to that. *Gary Walker* **7**

I'll Be Your Mirror

LOU REED

FABER AND FABER £20

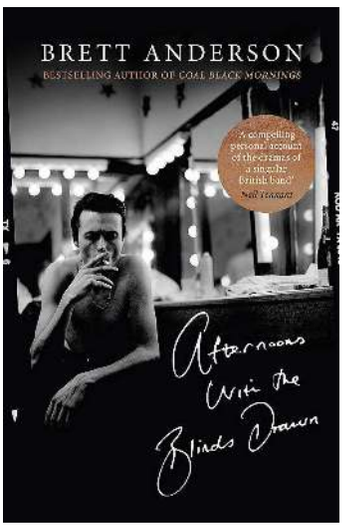


In the pantheon of rock's greatest lyricists Lou Reed is right up there (though lagging behind Dylan, like everybody else). As a clearly impressed D. Bowie, latterly of Beckenham, once stated: "He gave us the environment in which to put our more theatrical vision. He supplied us with the stretch and the landscape, and we peopled it." Reed's literate approach to lyric writing was shaped by his early aspiration to be a novelist ("I wanted to write the great American novel, but I also loved rock & roll") and his tutelage under the poet and short story writer Delmore Schwartz. Reed also drew inspiration for words to sing to music from his own life, and it helped that he was at the epicentre of New York's art scene in the 60s. The lyrics from his stint in The Velvet Underground alone are a hallowed wonder, with love songs *Pale Blue Eyes* and *I'll Be Your Mirror* a testament to his tender side. Back in print, and updated with the lyrics to his final album with Metallica, *Lulu*, file your copy next to *The Complete Works Of Shakespeare*. ***Gary Tipp*** **9**

Afternoons With The Blinds Drawn

BRETT ANDERSON

LITTLE BROWN £18.99



Suede's Brett Anderson follows up on his excellent early-days memoir *Coal Black Mornings* with another revelatory dip into his life as a blouse-wearing rock star. This is the book he said he wouldn't write, as he details the sudden rise and gradual decline of both his band and emotional well-being. A skilled and lyrical writer, Anderson not only recounts the band's narrative from playing empty pubs to semi-superstardom, but also tries to take a step back from the account to offer up his after-the-dust-has-settled thoughts on events in a broader context. It's a trick he performs really well throughout. For instance, his analysis of the whirlwind of hype that turned Suede into overnight music press darlings is well considered, and the breakdown of his relationship with Bernard Butler is grown-up and even-handed. His personal spiral into debauchery and drug dependency, and how that damaged the band, is necessarily oblique and the reader is spared the grittier details. *GT* **8**

Rock'n'Roll Sweepstakes

CAMPBELL DEVINE

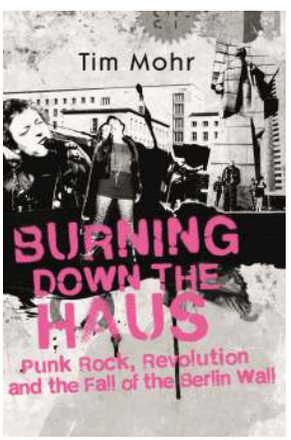
OMNIBUS PRESS £20

Way back in 1974, the perma-permed Ian Hunter wrote *Diary Of A Rock'N'Roll Star*, a frank, intriguing diary of Mott The Hoople's 1972 US tour. It's a cool classic of the genre and now reads as an incredible period piece. Fast forward, and glam survivor Hunter is now the subject of a chunky authorised biography, of which *Rock'N'Roll Sweepstakes* is only the first volume. Hunter was clearly generous with his time (as were his bandmates) when talking to author Campbell Devine, and the biog greatly benefits from an intricate level of insight and detail. Hunter was a war baby, whose family moved to Scotland during the conflict, and tales of this time over the border are recounted with great affection. Fame took its time to knock on Hunter's door and he'd been plugging away in the music business since the late 50s in various bands, before teaming up with Mott The Hoople. This slowburn struggle adds depth to this account of Hunter's fascinating journey, where all of rock's bumps and jumps have been captured along the way. *GT* **8**

Burning Down The Haus

TIM MOHR

DIALOGUE BOOKS £20



Berlin is best known now for techno, but in the 1980s it was punk's primitive force that prevailed, beamed over the Wall to East Berlin by Western radio. How much this actually contributed to November 1989's 'Mauerfall' is debatable, but Tim Mohr, who spent the early 1990s in the once divided city, DJing in squatted buildings, makes a convincing case for the movement's influence. Based on numerous interviews with participants, his gripping history, written much like a novel, is a stark, timely reminder of music's power to protest and transform. Emphasising the dropouts' growing ties to organised resistance, he depicts a tightly knit community threatened only by skinheads and, well, the country's entire government, with the terrible injustices and covert practices of the Stasi, the DDR's secret police, unflinchingly detailed. There's an inevitability to the tale, of course, but Mohr offers up fresh perspectives which also provide reminders that many East Germans merely wanted a more democratic system, not reunification, which is a source of some of Germany's current difficulties. ***Wyndham Wallace*** **8**

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DREAM MACHINES

Audio-Technica

AT-ART1000

£4,450 eu.audio-technica.com

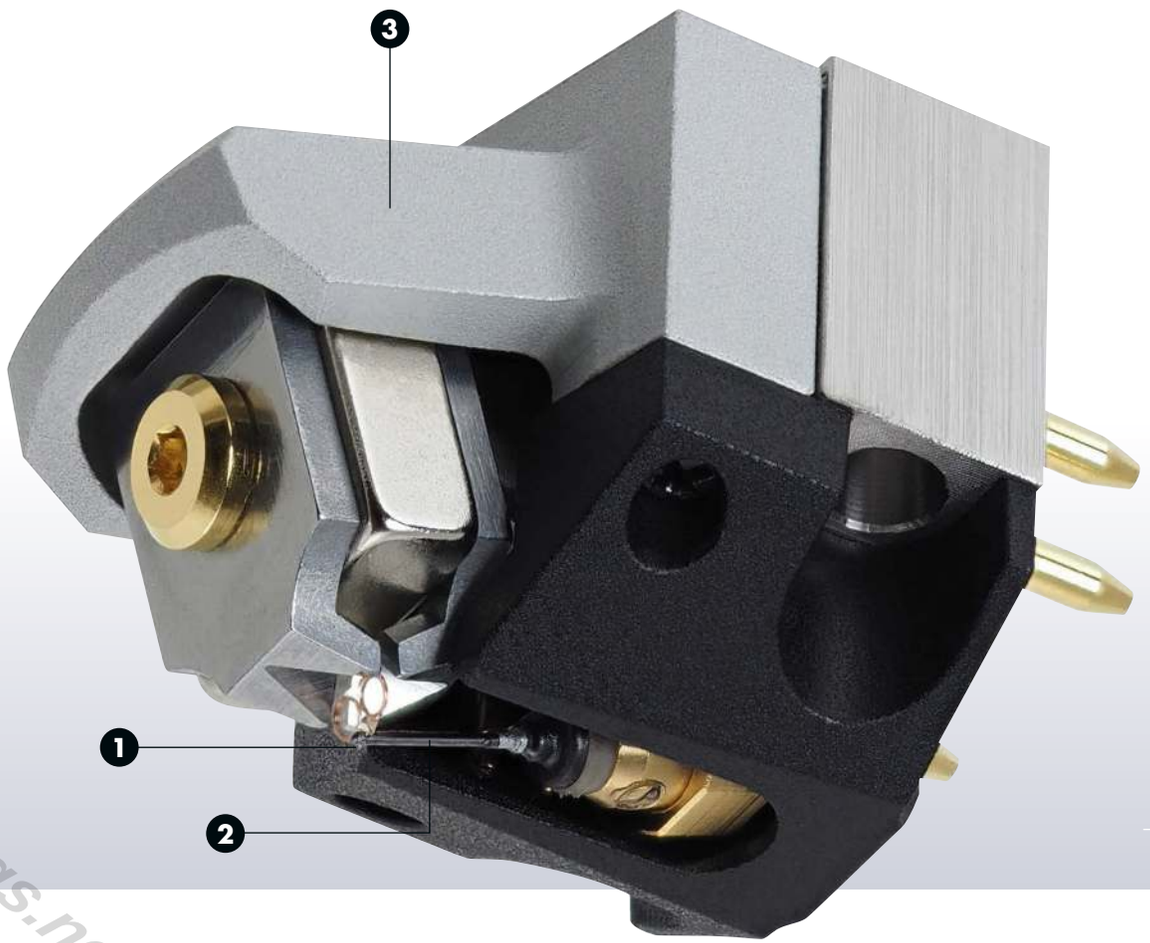
A top-of-the-range cartridge that brings both innovation and quality to the party

Audio-Technica's supreme top-of-the-range moving coil cartridge is based upon a titanium, aluminium and injection-moulded chassis construction. In a mere normal cartridge design, you have your moving coils positioned inside the chassis, sitting in position. Then you have a slim cantilever sticking out from the coils, with a stylus tip on the end. Not here. The coils are positioned on the other end. That is, the moving coils are positioned directly above the stylus tip without the need to transmit along the length of the cantilever. This close proximity between the coil movement and stylus tip enhances sonics. This shifting of the coils is innovative stuff that pretty much goes against the grain of the mainstream.

1 STYLUS TIP
A special line contact-shaped stylus features a diamond stylus on the end.

2 BEING BORON
This lightweight solid boron cantilever enhances sound quality by revealing extra detail.

3 VIBRATION REDUCER
The inclusion of titanium in the body, machined to reduce vibrations, lowers veiling noise and improves sound.



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Connect via Bluetooth to listen to your records through your wireless speakers or headphones

Sony PS-LX310BT TURNTABLE

£230 www.sony.co.uk

A fully automatic deck with a built-in phono stage at a nice price. **John Pickford** pairs up

Sony's new record player, the PS-LX310BT is a no-nonsense deck providing traditional vinyl replay along with modern Bluetooth connectivity. It features a built-in phono amp to enable a direct interface with Bluetooth devices and cable-connected amp/speaker combos alike.

Growing up in the 1970s and 80s, Sony audio products appeared to stand head and shoulders above other consumer audio brands. This new conventionally styled, elegant turntable is aimed at those who wish to enjoy a fuss-free vinyl experience without the need for a multitude of chunky boxes to make music. Simply pair up with some Bluetooth compatible headphones and you're away. Of course, the turntable can also be hooked up to existing audio systems via RCA phono leads, which is exactly what I did for this review.

Getting going straight from the box is simple, requiring nothing more than attaching the drive belt and placing the platter on the spindle. The dust cover also needs to be fitted. However, the whole process from packaging to play only takes a few minutes and demands no particular skill, even if you've never before operated a turntable.

There's no need to worry about potential vinyl damage by a shaky hand cueing either,

THIS IS WHAT THIS DECK DOES BEST, MAKING MUSIC FUN AND FUNKY WITH NO AIRS AND GRACES

as the PS-LX310BT is fully automatic. Press the Start button and the tonearm automatically locates the beginning of the record, once you've selected either 7 or 12 inches via the Size rotary control knob and, of course, set the correct speed (33 or 45) from the Speed control. When playback has ended, the tonearm returns to its resting position. Pressing the Stop button during playback also returns the arm to rest. Should you wish to play a song from an LP that's not at the start of either side or skip a track, there are Up and Down buttons that lift the tonearm, so you can move it above the desired track and lower it into the groove.

All these functions make record playing simple, and usefully prevent damage to your precious vinyl. I'm particularly pleased to see the inclusion of a speed selector, as many turntable manufacturers view 7" 45rpm replay

Featuring a new straight design, the tone arm boosts traceability for clear sound

as an afterthought, yet the PS-LX310BT even includes a 45rpm adaptor for singles with large centre holes or those that have been 'dinked' for use in jukeboxes.

Removing the PS-LX310BT from the box, I am met with a sleek, plastic chassis, along with the platter and dust cover, which I assemble in less than five minutes. Hooked up to my office system, I set the controls to play a 12" album at 33 (and a third) rpm, select my newly acquired copy of Vanilla Fudge's eponymous debut album (Atlantic 1969) and press the Start button. As the stylus settles into the groove of opening track *Ticket To Ride*, I decide to skip on to track two, making use of the Up and Down controls. As the group's cover of Curtis Mayfield's *People Get Ready* plays, I hear a decent rendition of the track that's more engaging than I was expecting, given the nature and price of the unit.

This album of quasi-operatic interpretations of mid-1960s pop and soul tunes is highly dynamic, yet doesn't seem to phase the PS-LX310BT at all. Rhythms are rendered reasonably well, while the tonal range on offer is quite impressive, albeit with rounded-off frequency extremes.

Compared with similarly priced rivals such as the Rega Planar 1, the Sony turntable doesn't reveal as much detail or nuance, but then the Rega is extremely basic in operation, with no automation or Bluetooth compatibility.

Switching to 7" and 45rpm to play some old mono singles, the PS-LX310BT hits its stride. Aretha Franklin's version of Otis Redding's *Respect* gets toes tapping from the get-go, while The Who's *My Generation* sounds as fierce as I've ever heard it. These wonderful mono 45s from the 1960s are far from high-fidelity recordings and in many ways their direct punch and drive are better served here than when played on my reference system. This is what this deck does best, making music fun and funky with no airs and graces. It doesn't find fault with lo-fi recordings and presents a musical rendition of finer material. Sony's latest turntable is a great modern way to enjoy traditional record playing.

8

VERDICT

PROS	CONS
FULLY AUTOMATIC	THE COMPETITION
BLUETOOTH COMPATIBILITY	
FUN AND FLUID SOUND	
EASE OF USE	

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Fluance RT83

TURNTABLE

$350 www.fluance.com

A belt-drive design with an Ortofon 2M Red cartridge, **Paul Rigby** sizes up a budget contender

Readers might remember that I reviewed Fluance's RT81 deck a little while back: a lower-cost design and one of six turntables that this Canadian company features in its roster. The RT83 increases the price, but also the build and parts quality.

Like the RT81, the RT83 is a twin-speed turntable with the speed controlled by a dual power/speed control knob on the near-left of the plinth.

Speaking of the plinth, it's finished in a rather nice Walnut veneer that looks very presentable. On top of that is a dust cover. Those looking for sonic excellence should remove the cover during play to reduce vibrations, which translate into veiling noise that will impact on sound quality.

Elsewhere, you'll see a motor, supported by silicone isolation. Around that is a belt that runs around the outer rim of the aluminium platter. That platter rings when struck: not usually a particularly good sign. It is also a source of some veiling noise, so more dedicated users might like to consider methods to damp the platter; you can buy damping pads that stick under the platter to reduce that ringing. A sorbothane sheet of, say 100mm square, can be bought for around £5-£6 from companies that trade on eBay. There are plenty to choose from.

A half-decent, sub-9", S-shaped tonearm features a typical SME-type removable headshell. The sort you'd find on a Technics turntable, for example. Hanging off the end of that is an Ortofon 2M Red moving magnet cartridge. Now, this cartridge is a big plus for the RT83; it's a quality item and sells for around £90 on its own.

The solid wood cabinet and a precise metal platter ensure isolation from unwanted vibrations

In terms of sound quality, if not lifestyle convenience, the lack of an internal phono amplifier is a 'good thing', as it reduces high-frequency noise, but that does mean that you will need to supply an external model or one found within an integrated amplifier.

The RT83 is classed as semi-automatic but it isn't really. At the end of an LP playing, the tonearm is not returned to its cradle. That is, when the stylus hits the run-out grooves of your LP, the power cuts, the platter ceases to turn and the arm just sits there – so be careful not to knock the resting tonearm at this point, in case of cartridge damage.

Comparing the RT83 to its cheaper brethren, the RT81 from Fluance, with its Audio-Technica AT-95 cartridge and utilising an external phono amplifier, lining up both rock and jazz, the RT83 offered a noticeably greater sense of maturity, providing more midrange air and space, while brass was more focused on the RT83 and bass held a greater presence.

Comparing the RT83 to the lower-cost but decidedly more audiophile (in design terms) Rega RP1, the RT83 couldn't compete. The Fluance performed well and made a good fist of trying to bring a sense of coherence to the overall sound but, in the end, the RT83 lost out in terms of overall precision, focus and midrange insight, while bass offered more character via the Rega.

That said, it would be unfair to see the RT83 as any sort of failure after the Rega comparison because the RT83 is not aimed at audiophiles. It's aimed at a lifestyle audience and, on that basis, it's a solid choice.

Before you look seriously at an RT83, you have to decide what sort of eyes you're using. If you use strictly audiophile eyes (and ears), the RT83 doesn't quite hit the mark. It's a completely different matter if your gaze is powered by lifestyle batteries, though, because, on that level, this turntable provides excellent sonic highlights in terms of bass, high frequencies and dynamic reach.

The RT83 is a good turntable to tweak and enhance over time, and sound can improve if you set your mind to the task: the platter, platter mat and headshell are prime candidates for that. This is a solid and sturdy turntable that performs well. In its lifestyle niche, it's recommended.

8

VERDICT

PROS	CONS
CARTRIDGE	TONEARM
LIFESTYLE ELEMENTS	PLATTER
SONICS	PLATTER MAT
INSTALLATION	

THE RT83 IS A GOOD TURNTABLE TO TWEAK AND ENHANCE OVER TIME IF YOU SET YOUR MIND TO THE TASK

Worldvinyls.net

The Planar 10 was heavily inspired by the ultimate Rega turntable, the Naiad

Rega PLANAR 10 TURNTABLE

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

£3,599/£4,499 WITH APHETA 3 MC www.rega.co.uk

A state-of-the-art turnable at a fair price. **Jason Kennedy** is suitably impressed

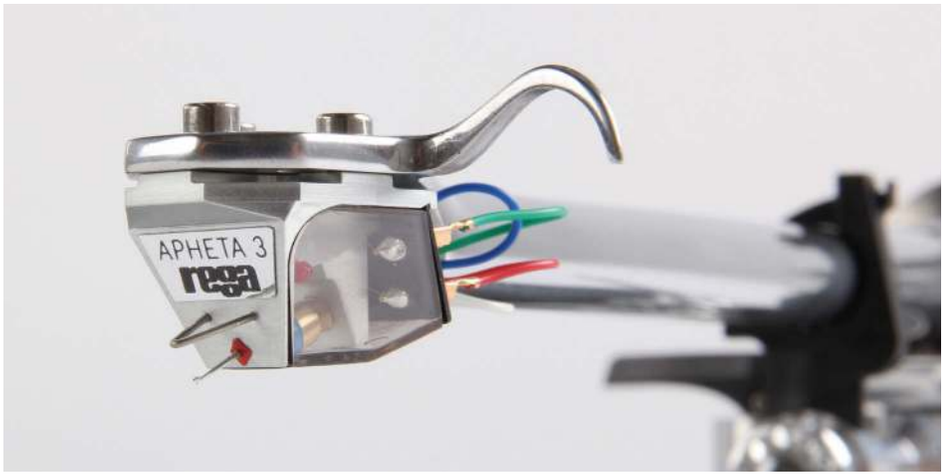
It was probably 10 years ago that rumours began to circulate about Rega building a cost-no-object turntable that involved new materials and approaches to the challenge of extracting more information from a vinyl groove than anyone had ever achieved before.

That turned out to be the Naiad, a £25,000 made-to-order model that, while inaccessible to most, provided Rega's R&D department with a wealth of innovations that have subsequently been used across their turntable range. The bracing between bearing and arm for instance can be seen in all but the least expensive models and the sandwich plinth construction with a foam core in between rigid skins has filtered down to the P6.

The RP10 was the first major beneficiary of Naiad tech, but five years on the Planar – or P10 – goes considerably further toward replicating the Naiad in an affordable, mass-produced form. Like the P8 that preceded it earlier in the year, the P10 has a tiny plinth made of a sandwich construction using a different, stronger type of foam to the RP10.

This turntable doesn't have a hinged lid, but a removable dust cover with a locating pin to stop it spinning if the power is turned on. The platter looks the same as the RP10's; it's still made of ceramic but has been reshaped to reduce further the potential for adding vibration, the braces between arm and bearing are now ceramic on top and phenolic below and the main bearing itself has been redesigned using a two-part housing.

While the innards of the separate power supply are the same as the RP10, the casework has been upgraded and the switches are much more positive, there is also speed adjustment on the back panel. The RB3000 tonearm again looks ostensibly like



its predecessor but has a lighter new bias assembly and tighter bearing tolerances.

I reviewed the P10 with a new version of the Rega Apheta moving coil cartridge that can be purchased with the P10 at a discount. The Apheta 3 has a new Fine Line stylus that's mounted through 90 degrees for a very stiff fixing in the aluminium cantilever.

The aim of a record player is to extract as much of the signal as possible from the groove and to add as little of its own vibrations to that signal, the second part of that challenge being arguably the toughest. By making the P10 extremely light and stiff in every area apart from the platter, Rega have been more successful than most.

This is an exceptionally revealing turntable, arm and cartridge combination, one that reveals much of the character ascribed to vinyl actually comes from turntables. By adding vibrations to those being picked up by the stylus, most create a fuzzy glow that sounds nice but is in fact a veil or veneer that gets in the way of the musical detail.

This is revealed by playing a large variety of records on the P10 and hearing such gargantuan differences between them that it takes a bit of getting used to. I happened to put on *Sticky Fingers* by The Rolling Stones (for *Can't You Hear Me Knocking*) and have to say I was disappointed by how small and compressed it sounds. The riff is still fabulous, but it lacks impact.

Joe Walsh's *The Smoker You Drink…* from the same era is large-scale, dynamic and full of energy – it jumps out of the speakers and fills up the room. I've been playing it for a long time but never heard it sound this good before. More contemporary releases that have been carefully made are even more stunning, Binker And Moses' *Alive In The East* is phenomenally powerful, immediate and as alive as the title suggests.

THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY REVEALING TURNTABLE, ARM AND CARTRIDGE COMBINATION

The Rega P10 doesn't sound like a turntable at all, it sounds like the master tape more so than any other record player I have enjoyed, so much so that it has kept me up late going through my collection ever since it arrived. This is a genuine high-end turntable, don't let the fact that it's not excessively priced make you think otherwise.

Rega have always been at the forefront of high sound quality for sensible prices, but with the P10 they are offering incredible levels of resolution and revealing that our vinyl is even better than we thought. **10**

VERDICT

PROS	CONS
STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY	DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A HIGH-END TURNTABLE (JUST SOUNDS BETTER THAN MOST)
TRULY ASTONISHING SOUND QUALITY	
REASONABLE PRICE AND A DECENT DUST COVER	

Alternatives

GRAND PRIX AUDIO MONACO 2 £37,500

If you want to give the P10 a run for its sound quality, this ought to do it, with carbon fibre build and direct drive, it puts speed stability at the forefront of its goals and has garnered a lot of acclaim in high-end circles.

TECHDAS AIR FORCE ZERO £150,000

Using air bearings on both motor and very high-mass platter, this Japanese battleship is not the biggest model in the range but it's certainly one to consider if you want the ultimate turntable (and can afford it).

CONTINUUM OBSIDIAN £39,998

With a magnetic levitation system for the high-mass platter, suspension for isolation and a magnetically suspended armboard a lot of thought has gone into Continuum's 'compact' turntable and it reaches new highs as a result.

Worthmags.net

CLOSER

VINYL'S GREATEST FINAL TRACKS

#7 BLUR
THIS IS A LOW

BRIAN RASIC/GETTY

Parklife's final cut was inspired by The Shipping Forecast. **Gary Tipp** wants Rockall to do with it

Before the release of *Parklife*, Blur's prospects weren't looking all that sunny. Sophomore album *Modern Life Is Rubbish* (1993) may have secured the band some better haircuts and a new English pop sound, wresting them away from the dismal baggy of debut album *Leisure*, but commercially it tanked. As guitarist Graham Coxon told *The Guardian*, "It was overlooked because of the rise of grunge, but we were halfway to somewhere." He had a point and in the wake of revelatory lead single *Girls And Boys*, the full throttle success of *Parklife* meant that Blur – and, for better or worse (worse), Britpop – had arrived.

Originally titled *We Are The Low*, the album's closing cut (we're ignoring the brief, fluffy instrumental coda of *Lot 105*) was a scene-stealing, transcendental highlight. The track was conceived as an instrumental during the *Parklife* sessions, mainly because Damon Albarn was struggling to put any meaningful words to it.

Inspiration was finally gleaned for the now retitled *This Is A Low* from, appropriately enough, a quintessentially British source, with Albarn working in the obliquely familiar place names of The Shipping Forecast to create the song's clever narrative.

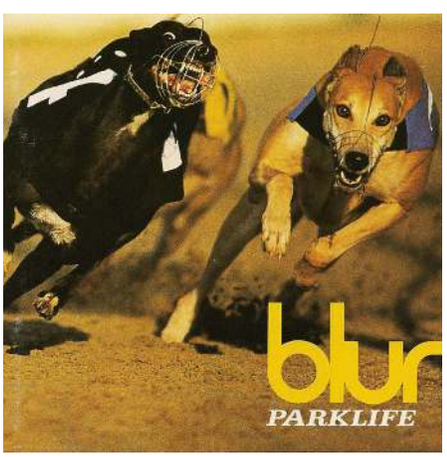
Rakish, beanpole bass man Alex James, he of cheese-making in the Cotswolds notoriety, heroically recounts his part in the story in his autobiography *A Bit Of A Blur*: "For his Christmas present, I bought him [Albarn] a handkerchief with a map of The Shipping Forecast on it. We used to listen to it on tour in America to remind us of home. We always found The Shipping Forecast very soothing. It's very good for a hangover. Good cure for insomnia, too."

Albarn took the handkerchief and instead of blowing his nose or sneakily re-gifting, he began to work his magic with it. "I'd had this line, 'And into the sea go pretty England and me', for a long time," Albarn revealed. "So I started at the Bay of Biscay. Back for tea. 'Tea' rhymes with 'me'. And then I went 'Hit traffic on the Dogger Bank'. 'Bank' – 'rank' – so 'up the Thames to find a taxi rank'. And I just went round."

While the Phil Daniels-voiced Cockney, knees-up bollocks of the album's title track may have provided its most easily quotable three and a bit minutes ('John's got brewer's droop/ He gets intimidated by the dirty pigeons', etc), ultimately, it was the swirling romance of *This Is A Low* that saw Blur dramatically upping their game far closer to the levels of the great British pop groups they looked up to, such as The Beatles, The Kinks and The Small Faces.

TYNE, FORTH AND CROMARTY

The track quickly became an enduring live favourite with die-hard fans of the band, most notably as the closer at Blur's Mile End stadium gig in 1995, as well as Glastonbury in 1994. *This Is A Low* was also performed by the recently reunited Albarn and Coxon at their comeback performance at the 2009 *NME* Awards. ●



"We always found The Shipping Forecast very soothing"

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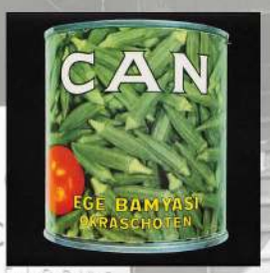

CAN
EGE BAMYASI
Mute

BONNIE PRINCE BILLY
I MADE A PLACE
Domino

BEN FROST
CATASTROPHIC DELIQUESCENCE
(MUSIC FROM FORTITUDE 2015-2018)
Mute

SQUID
TOWN CENTRE EP
Speedy Wunderground

DOG IN THE SNOW
VANISHING LANDS
Bella Union

THE FLAMING LIPS
THE SOFT BULLETIN: LIVE AT RED ROCKS
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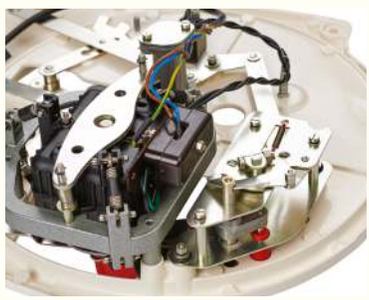

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